# Daily Report

# Near East & South Asia

FBIS-NES-96-012
Thursday
18 January 1996

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# Daily Report
## Near East & South Asia

*FBIS-NES-96-012* *18 January 1996*

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## Yemeni-Eritrean Conflict

### Tunisian Envoy Conveys Message to Salih

*JN1701212096 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 17 Jan 96*

[FBIS Translated Text] Brother Sadek Fayala, Tunisian secretary of state for African affairs and envoy of Tunisian President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, left Sanaa for home this morning, concluding a three-day visit to our country.

During the visit, he met with brother Lieutenant General President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih and handed him a message from his brother President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali dealing with the situation in the southern Red Sea area and Tunisian efforts to achieve a peaceful solution to the problem resulting from the Eritrean aggression on the Yemeni island of al-Hanish al-Kabir.

The Tunisian envoy was seen off by brothers 'Abduh 'Ali 'Abd-al- Rahman, deputy foreign minister; Marwan Nu'man, head of the Africa Department at the Foreign Ministry; a representative of the Presidency Protocol Office; (Al-Moncef al-Lawati), Tunisian ambassador in Sanaa; and a number of Tunisian Embassy staff.

### Eritrean Coverage of Conflict Over Islands

*WA2012150095*

For further reportage of the Eritrean-Yemeni confrontation over the Hanish Islands in the Red Sea, including official Eritrean Foreign Ministry statements, please see the East Africa section of the Sub-Saharan Africa DAILY REPORT.

## Islamic Affairs

### Political Islam Review: AL-SHA'B 2 Jan

*NC0901142096*

[FBIS Editorial Report] The following is a comprehensive review of all items in the 2 January edition of the Arabic language newspaper AL-SHA'B that pertain to political Islamic issues.

**CONTENTS:**

1. Memorandum Urges 'Joint Struggle' To Hold Early Elections
2. Article Puts Egypt at 'Tail End' of Pluralistic States
3. Mashhur Notes 'Zionist' Interest in Strait
4. MB Deputy Guide Examines Islamic Recovery
5. Human Rights Group Report Reveals Election Rigging
6. Press Association Calls Sit-In To Protest Journalists Trials
7. Acquitted MB Member Sentenced in 'Secret' Retrial

#### MEMORANDUM URGES 'JOINT STRUGGLE' TO HOLD EARLY ELECTIONS

A 400-word report by Qutb al-'Arabi, on page 1, says that "the committee on coordination between opposition parties and bodies" held its "third" meeting last Saturday and prepared a memorandum to be discussed by party chairmen to "make the suitable decisions after the complete rigging of the November elections."

The memorandum underlines "joint struggle to hold early public elections in the context of political and procedural reforms to guarantee that the elections will give equal opportunities to both the opposition and the National Democratic Party, will be clean, and will express the true views of the voters." The memorandum proposes the holding of "a national rally that represents the nation's unity with opposition leaders in their democratic demands."

The report refers to "popular rallies" held by the opposition in several governorates and trade union centers "denouncing the rigging of the elections and calling for the dissolution of the false People's Assembly and for new elections." The rallies also called for "setting up a national front embracing all parties, trade unions, and cultural and technical societies to work for restoring true democracy in Egypt."

Page 4 features other reports on such rallies and meetings held to underline these demands.

#### ARTICLE PUTS EGYPT AT 'TAIL END' OF PLURALISTIC STATES

Majdi Ahmad Husayn's 4,000-word article, on page 2, compares Egyptian pluralism on the one hand and European, Asian, African, and Arab pluralism on the other to show that "Egyptian pluralism is backward" even in the Arab region.

Stating that Egyptian rulers' main concern is "to keep the ruler's seat," he says that "they lead Egypt to the bottomless pit." He adds that the winds of democracy blow everywhere around Egypt, but "Egypt, thanks to its rulers, has become a habitat for barbarism that knows no respect for the law or the Constitution."

To prove his point, he compares the elections in Egypt and in Turkey. He states that election results in Turkey were consistent in all the media, while the radio, television, and press versions of the election results in Egypt were conflicting. He also notes that the "right to hold meetings, demonstrate, and go on strike are guaranteed to all in Turkey," where he attended an opposition rally in a "soccer field" that involved an audience of 50,000. In contrast, he notes that the place they were granted as an opposition party in Egypt "took

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no more than 20 citizens" and meeting places are usually surrounded by the security forces.

He notes that Turkish parties used cafes to meet with the public and that the government financed electoral campaigns "to avoid resorting to illegal means." Husayn refers to elections in other countries, like Kazakhstan, Moldova, and Haiti.

Examining Arab regimes, he divides them into "pluralistic" and "totalitarian." He notes, however, that pluralism in the Arab world is based on "the democracy of catharsis rather than application." In other words, opposition parties are allowed to give vent to some of their sentiments without dreaming to control the authority.

Of the pluralistic regimes that "grant a wider margin to the opposition," he names Yemen, Jordan, and Morocco. On the other hand, he uses Tunisia as an example of "the pluralistic regimes that narrowed the margin available to the opposition."

Husayn says that Egypt "used to be in between the two types," giving opposition papers the right to speak. "The 29 November coup threw Egypt into the second, bad type, putting it at the tail end of pluralistic systems." He says that "democracy became a dead, motionless body after the 29 November coup." He continues: "The freedom of the opposition press has become like an obstacle that doesn't square with the process of bulldozing democracy with the bulldozer of despotism."

He concludes that Egypt now occupies "penultimate" place among pluralistic states. Even nonpluralistic states, like Syria and Sudan, are witnessing changes for the better, he says.

He finally stresses that the "awakening" of the opposition and "the popular resistance of the 29 November coup" must escalate to save Egypt from a "gloomy fate."

## MASHHUR NOTES 'ZIONIST' INTEREST IN STRAIT

A 150-word commentary by Deputy Muslim Brotherhood [MB] Guide Mustafa Mashhur, on page 5, says that the elections "will not divert our attention from the Zionist enemy's conspiracies and evil schemes" against Islamic states. He notes that the "Zionist enemy" took part in the recent Eritrean aggression against the island of Hanish because they are very interested in the strait of Ban el- Mandeb in view of its "strategic importance."

He hopes Egypt and Arab and Islamic states will give the issue the attention it merits and will stand together with Yemen to support its right to restore its territory.

## MB DEPUTY GUIDE EXAMINES ISLAMIC RECOVERY

Mustafa Mashhur's 1,500-word column, on page 5, examines "the present and future of the Islamic recovery."

He says that "Islamic movements emerged in various parts of the Islamic world to sensitize Muslims to their duty toward their religion" when "the occupiers spread corruption and degeneration." He names al-Mawdudi's Islamic group in India, Hasan al-Banna's Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, and the Welfare Party in Turkey. It was natural for these groups to cooperate and coordinate, after committing themselves to the proper Islamic approach, he says, adding that they went through "ordeals" when the enemies woke up to this "Islamic recovery" and set up military regimes to strike at it. But the people responded to the Islamic movements despite the enemy's corruption, he says.

He notes that the Egyptian people are returning to "God's guidance" despite "the harassment" to which the Muslim Brothers were subjected.

Looking at the present, he refers to "recurring conflicts between the Islamic movements and the ruling regimes that are loyal to the enemy and that cooperate and conspire to choke the voice of Islam and destroy these moderate, sound Islamic movements." Referring to the "conspiracy against the Muslim Brotherhood," he says that the ruling regime "feared the public responsiveness toward the Islamic alliance." "Hence the fierce war of arrests, false accusations, and military trials... and attempts to put the mark of terrorism and violence on the Muslim Brothers." He refers here to the ruling regime's practices during the 29 November parliamentary elections and the "bad laws" that were issued to protect the regime.

Mashhur believes that the Welfare Party's triumph in the Turkish elections indicates the emergence of this Islamic recovery in a secularist state "despite the conspiracies."

Looking at the future, he says that it is in the hands of God, "who will aid His soldiers and give the upper hand to Islam."

He finally cautions the "unfair" that God will bring them to account and tells the oppressed to "be patient and they will triumph."

## HUMAN RIGHTS GROUP REPORT REVEALS ELECTION RIGGING

Page 6 features an unattributed 4,000-word report that cites passages from the "final report" the Egyptian Human Rights Organization prepared on the "election rigging, the blatant violations, and the obvious government interference in the elections."

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Individual cases are cited to illustrate the different violations.

## PRESS ASSOCIATION CALLS SIT-IN TO PROTEST JOURNALISTS TRIALS

An unattributed 100-word report on page 1 says that the Press Association's "freedom committee" has called for "a general sit-in on Monday, 15 January, to protest the trial and detention of a number of journalists in accordance with law No. 93 for the year 95."

## ACQUITTED MB MEMBER SENTENCED IN 'SECRET' RETRIAL

A 600-word commentary by 'Ala' al-Bahhar, on page 2, says that three weeks after the military court acquitted Engineer 'Abd-al- Wahhab Sharaf-al-Din, head of the Engineers Syndicate branch in Suez, of the charge of supporting terrorism, "the court held a secret retrial and sentenced Sharaf-al-Din to three years in prison on the charge of knowing about and failing to report" a leaflet urging rebellion against the regime.

Al-Bahhar says that the retrial was conducted "to indulge the officials."

**Political Islam Review: AL-SHA'B 5 Jan**

*NC1201132096*

[FBIS Editorial Report] The following is a comprehensive review of all items in the 5 January edition of the Arabic language newspaper AL-SHA'B that pertain to political Islamic issues.

**CONTENTS:**

1. New Government Dashes People's Hopes
2. Court To Rule on Trying Brotherhood Members Before Military Court
3. Sudan's Intelligence Not Involved in Smuggling Weapons
4. Brotherhood Official Banned From Traveling Abroad
5. Possible Coalition Combinations in Turkey Viewed
6. Turkish Elections Analyzed
7. Sidqi Government Rapped Over Performance
8. Writer Says People Want Government of Reconciliation
9. Figures View Need for National Front
10. Labor Party Official Discusses Imprisonment, Torture
11. Parliamentary Elections Criticized
12. NDP Rapped For Not Having Copt Candidates
13. Official Interviewed on Muslim-Christian Dialogue
14. Husayn Expects al-Janzuri Government To Fail

## NEW GOVERNMENT DASHES PEOPLE'S HOPES

The main story on page 1 deals with government change and the appointment of Dr. Kamal al-Janzuri as prime minister. The 1,200- word report by Mahmud Bakri claims that the long-awaited government change was a "disappointment," with the new government including the same old faces "and excluding only one minister accused of corruption." Others, it says, were excluded for "their failure to implement their ministries' plans. Keeping the transport and communications minister in his post was quite surprising following repeated transport accidents, including successive accidents in the past 10 days that claimed the lives of citizens." The writer views speculation on the extent of the change preceding the resignation of Dr. 'Atif Sidqi's government and notes President Mubarak's remarks that any change would be limited. But, the report adds, asking Dr. al-Janzuri to form the government to prepare Egypt to enter the 21st century raises many questions about the new government and its role. The report details official and popular speculation while al-Janzuri was interviewing prospective ministers, noting that "work inside ministries was paralyzed as each minister waited to see what would happen within hours." The report says that once the new government was announced the people started "to question the significance of what had happened, the time it took to choose the new ministers, and even the significance of removing Dr. Sidqi himself, since the pillars of his government are the men of the new government." It adds that "a wave of anger and disappointment swept the Egyptian street. Egyptians became convinced that their hopes of change had been dashed. The public waited for a government of reconciliation with the people and the political parties and forces, one that would tackle the deliberate rigging of the elections. But the people's hopes faded when they discovered the lie in the alleged government change. Every Egyptian is now looking angrily toward an unknown future that is virtually devastating this homeland."

## COURT TO RULE ON TRYING BROTHERHOOD MEMBERS BEFORE MILITARY COURT

A 100-word report on page 1 by Dawud Hasan says the Administrative Court has postponed until 4 June a session to hear the defense argument against the president's decision to try 82 Muslim Brotherhood members before the military court. It also says that the State Security Court in south Cairo decided to release 'Abd-al-Majid al-Dib, Yahya 'Abdallah al-Kumi, and 'Abd-al-Nasir 'Abd-al-Haqq. The State Security Court in Nasr

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city also rejected the interior minister's objection to the State Security Court's ruling of 13 December to release Wa'il Maghuri Isma'il and Salam Mahmud Yusuf, who were arrested four months ago on a charge of belonging to the Muslim Brotherhood.

## SUDAN'S INTELLIGENCE NOT INVOLVED IN SMUGGLING WEAPONS

An unattributed 90-word report on page 1 says the investigations held by the Higher State Security Prosecution Office with 55 members of the al-Jihad Organization refute reports of the involvement of Sudanese intelligence elements in smuggling weapons and explosives seized with the defendants and that the six Sudanese involved were found to be smugglers.

## BROTHERHOOD OFFICIAL BANNED FROM TRAVELING ABROAD

An unattributed 40-word report on page 1 says the Cairo Airport security authorities prevented the Muslim Brotherhood deputy guide, Counselor Ma'mun al-Hudaybi, from traveling to Turkey on 4 January. He was told that there are instructions from the interior minister banning his travel.

## POSSIBLE COALITION COMBINATIONS IN TURKEY VIEWED

A 1,800-word article by Dr. Ahmad Shawqi Hammad on page 2 views political prospects in Turkey following the parliamentary elections in which the Islamic Welfare Party of Necmettin Erbakan won most votes. The writer calls Erbakan the "tip of the Islamic iceberg" and a "pragmatist" well-versed in the parliamentary game and willing to ally his party with others, adding that this does not "belittle the man's importance or cast doubts about his religious credibility; it gives us a pragmatic picture of the man who cleverly broke the secular embargo and preserved for himself and his party their Islamic identity." The writer then views the various possible alliances and coalitions that could be made to form the government either with or without Erbakan but ends by saying that whatever coalition is formed, it could not govern long and that the new parliament will be there only to liquidate some political forces, such as the Republican People's Party, in preparation for the emergence of a political force that enjoys a clear majority that will stabilize parliament and the regime. The writer says he believes that "while the start of the century helped Ataturk come to power at the expense of the caliphate and sultanate, the elections will bring the Muslims back to power in Turkey in spite of Ataturk and the parliamentary games."

## TURKISH ELECTIONS ANALYZED

A 1,500-word analysis by Ahmad al-Suyufi on page 2 also deals with the Turkish elections and the emergence of the Islamic trend. It details some developments and incidents that show the Turks' aspiration to go back to their Islamic roots. It also views the various possible alliances that could be concluded to form a government and asks whether the military will move if the Welfare Party forms the government.

## SIDQI GOVERNMENT RAPPED OVER PERFORMANCE

A scathing 1,800-word report by Hasan al-Qamhawi on page 3 describes what it terms the nine lean years of Dr Sidqi's government. The report, backed with figures from local and international sources, castigates the previous government for its failure to increase the national growth rate and help investors who lost their savings when several savings institutions collapsed, and its measures, which reduced subsidies and made the low-income groups bear the brunt of the consequences of economic reform. Sidqi's government is also accused of preferring subservience over an Arab economic grouping and of responding to the instructions of the World Bank and the IMF, adding that "Egypt's economy started to be managed in Washington; capitalist, high taxes and price-increase laws began to follow each other; and the country's doors opened wide to foreign goods and capital, especially Zionist." It also blamed the previous government for failing to exploit Egyptians' savings, selling Egypt's debts very cheaply, selling the public sector to foreigners, accelerating economic normalization with the Zionists, and depending on "U.S. loans, grants, and aid that the United States gives to obtain the political and other stances it wants." The report argues that the agreement with the IMF and the World Bank helps "foreign influence penetrate the country and U.S. aid set up its own permanent offices inside the economic ministries on the pretext of developing and modernizing the administrative organs. These offices helped draw up the recent economic laws." Additionally, the report concludes, there was disharmony among ministers, causing crises, while corruption flourished and fraud multiplied.

## WRITER SAYS PEOPLE WANT GOVERNMENT OF RECONCILIATION

A 150-word comment by 'Amir 'Abd-al-Mun'im on page 3 claims the people do not want a government that talks about economic reforms and uses such "vague expressions." They want one that works to effect reconciliation with the people, he says, adding that it is not logical to have a government that embraces

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the Zionists while there are "battles and grinding wars everywhere in Egypt and prisons above and below ground." He says economic reforms are useless while the doors remain open for the corrupt and thieves who are depleting the country's economy.

## FIGURES VIEW NEED FOR NATIONAL FRONT

A 3,000 word report by 'Amr Salman on page 3 solicits the views of some prominent figures, mostly former officials, on the need to form a national front to confront the situation in the country following the parliamentary elections. Some of those interviewed come out in favor while others oppose such an idea. Former Information Minister Dr. Kamal Ahmad Abu-al-Majd supports the idea and stresses "that dialogue and contacts among the opposition parties, the head of state, and the government have become necessary and that any tepidity or severance of these contacts is bound to have negative consequences, the price of which will be paid by entire national action." The former chairman of the Judges Club, Counselor Yahya al-Rifa'i, gives no straight answer but launches a virulent attack on the emergency laws and the government's resorting to the military courts. Liberal Party leader Mustafa Kamil Murad notes that the opposition parties have already met and decided to form a permanent secretariat to discuss proposals on the solidarity of all the parties. Constitutional expert Dr. Muhammad 'Usfur approves of the notion and says it was first voiced when the Camp David Agreement was signed, representing "a grave deviation from national independence when it allowed U.S. and Israeli hegemony over Egypt's economic and political systems." Former al-Daqahliyah Governor Sa'd al-Sharbini appeals to all the parties to go out into the streets to recreate the Egyptian individual as the first step toward reform. Husayn 'Abd-al-Raziq, National Progressive Unionist Grouping Political Bureau secretary, says the idea of a front was excluded when the opposition parties met after the elections and adds that the objective now is to mobilize the public to compel the regime to rectify its political and legal positions. Author Usamah Anwar 'Ukashah says there is no justification for a front, since parties tend to form alliances over particular issues. Samih 'Ashur, a People's Assembly member from the Nasirite Party, suggests there is no alternative to a national front, while 'Ali-al-Din Salih, the leader of the Misr al-Fatah Party, says that talk of a national front is nonsense, because the government is monopolizing the rule and despises the people.

## LABOR PARTY OFFICIAL DISCUSSES IMPRISONMENT, TORTURE

A 2,800-word interview with 'Abd-al-Rahman Lutfi, Labor Party secretary in Mallawi, al-Minya, by Hasan al-Qamhawi on page 4 details how he was arrested before the elections and how he was tortured in prison.

## PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS CRITICIZED

The parliamentary elections remain one of the prominent issues for the newspaper. It carries on page 4 a 1,600-word report by 'Amr Salman and Dawud Hasan citing the views of various figures, all of whom criticize the outcome of what some term the "worst elections." They also regret the absence of the opposition.

## NDP RAPPED FOR NOT HAVING COPT CANDIDATES

The 3,500-word report of the Egyptian Human Rights Center To Support National Unity is carried on page 8. It is critical of the ruling National Democratic Party's failure to include Copts among its candidates during the People's Assembly elections and the low number of Copt candidates nominated by the other parties. It also rejects the principle of appointing Copts as deputies, because they would not be expressing the view of the electorate.

## OFFICIAL INTERVIEWED ON MUSLIM-CHRISTIAN DIALOGUE

The paper carries a 2,800-word interview with Dr. Najah al- Ghunaymi, a teacher of religion and philosophy at the College of Islamic Studies in al-Azhar University who deputized for al-Azhar imam Shaykh Jad-al-Haqq 'Ali Jad-al-Haqq at the Muslim-Christian conference held recently in Switzerland. In the interview, conducted by 'Abd-al-Hayy Muhammad, Dr. al-Ghunaymi views the Europeans' interest in dialogue with Muslims and their slogan of peaceful coexistence and understanding, noting that this mainly stems from the increasing number of Muslims living in the West. He then views the various issues and topics discussed during the conference and the statement that was issued. He voices the opinion that while Muslim-Christian dialogue is necessary, there are still obstacles preventing it from being effective because of views inherited by both sides.

## HUSAYN EXPECTS AL-JANZURI GOVERNMENT TO FAIL

The main thrust of 'Adil Husayn's 5,000-word article on page 5 is the performance of the outgoing Sidqi government, particularly in the economic sphere. He starts by saying he did not share the views of those who hope 1966 will be better than 1995, since the policies

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and officials in charge have not changed. He argues that the collapse of the country's positions and of Egypt's Arab and Islamic status requires a "faithful leadership in whose honesty, fairness, ideas, and policies the people can trust so that they can rally behind it against the enemies and achieve reform and renaissance." He adds that whatever hopes there were at the end of 1995 were dashed by government change. He says: "Some people believed the president would deal with what happened in the elections by radically changing the government. But the change was limited to the mere appointment of a new prime minister for the same government. Thus, those who brought us destruction and poverty have tightened their grip over the executive authority." He then gives figures and statistics on the economic performance of the country during the past 14 years, all based on articles written by Ibrahim Nafi', the progovernment chief editor of AL-AHRAM. He cites in this context the low economic growth rate, the drop in production rates and cotton exports, the deficit in the trade balance, unemployment, the drop in the value of wages, and the widening gap between the poor and the rich, asserting that most of the rich have not obtained their wealth legally. He also dwells on corruption, warning that it will become like AIDS if it is not fought and uprooted. He then says that Nafi's articles made people expect some radical change, since he is so close to the leadership, but the surprise came when the new government was formed from the old ministers, adding that even the new ones "differ from their predecessors only in name. We see those responsible for the cotton and other catastrophes still in their positions."

Husayn claims to respect new Prime Minister Dr. Kamal al-Janzuri, his honesty, and his criticism of international bodies' guidelines. He says he was chosen at a time when Egypt is under strong pressure from financial institutions to implement the second stage of the economic reform program. He adds that the government "must prepare immediately for the negotiations" with the IMF and the World Bank. Saying that these negotiations will be difficult, he adds: "Regardless of Dr. al-Janzuri's views, standing fast against foreign pressure needs more than the negotiators' deftness; it requires mobilizing the nation to stand fast against these pressures. More importantly, we cannot reject the IMF program just to maintain the existing failed conditions. The Labor Party repeatedly declared this stance during the Sidqi government's tenure. We reject the IMF guidelines and regard them as disruptive and damaging for the Egyptian economy. But we also believe that keeping our conditions as they are to be a squandering of our economic resources." The fight, he goes on to say, requires a "battling and highly efficient cabinet. It requires a cabinet other than the one accepted by Dr. al-Janzuri. I regret to say that I expect him to fail. Failure means acceptance of the humiliating retreat and the worsening of economic and noneconomic problems. It consequently means increased popular opposition and the involvement of the new government in escalating repressive and tyrannic measures." Husayn says hope of reform is now impossible and adds that the rulers cannot guarantee that their tyranny, as manifested by the rigged elections, can last. He urges more resistance and jihad, saying: "Let this ridiculous government change be one more reason for intensifying popular action to bring down the sham parliament and hold free and honest elections. There will be no stability while these unjust and tyrannical conditions remain. Let 1996 be the year of jihad for establishing the roots of democracy, the year of the people's return to power. Only this jihad will make 1966 different from previous years, God willing."

**Political Islam Review: AL-SHA'B 9 Jan**

*NC1401121596*

[FBIS Editorial Report] The following is a comprehensive review of all items in the 9 January edition of the Arabic language newspaper AL-SHA'B that pertain to political Islamic issues.

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1. Opposition Leaders Vow To Bring Down Parliament
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6. Egyptian-Zionist Information Banks Sought
7. Editor Denigrates New Cabinet Ministers
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**OPPOSITION LEADERS VOW TO BRING DOWN PARLIAMENT**

A 600-word unattributed report on pages 1 and 8 notes that leaders of the opposition parties met on 6 January to discuss developments following the election "disaster." They stressed the need to introduce urgent political and democratic reforms, which must start with "bringing down the current parliament."

**'Ayyash's Martyrdom Highlighted**

Muhammad Jamal 'Arafah, in a 400-word report on pages 1 and 8, notes that after "desperate attempts" for more than four years, the "Zionists" succeeded in killing Yahya 'Ayyash, one of the leaders of the

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Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas. He was killed by a mobile telephone given to him by an Israeli "agent," who was later smuggled to the United States, the report adds. The report notes that Israeli radio was the first to report the news of 'Ayyash's martyrdom.

A 2,000-word profile of 'Ayyash is published on page 8. The unattributed biography reviews 'Ayyash's life, whom the Israelis credit with carrying out 6 major suicide operations in which "70 Zionists" were killed and more than 340 others wounded.

### SHUKRI VIEWS MISTRUST BETWEEN GOVERNMENT, OPPOSITION

In a 1,500-word report on pages 1 and 8, Labor Party Chairman Ibrahim Shukri notes that "suddenly," contrary to his earlier denial of the need for a government reshuffle after the elections, President Mubarak has appointed Dr. Kamal al-Janzuri prime minister. Within a few hours the new cabinet was announced, with only 7 ministers from the old cabinet. The old prime minister Sidqi is also absent from the new one cabinet. Shukri notes that the new cabinet's plan contains no reference to the "current crisis of confidence between the government and the opposition" following the elections. This, he adds, means the absence of any "democratic dimension" in the new Cabinet plan. While sympathizing with the new Cabinet's declared goals of increasing productivity and exports and welcoming the new prime minister, who is known for his "efficiency," Shukri points out that what counts is "performance," because "slogans" are not enough. He asks: "Can the government accomplish all this in the absence of active and effective participation by the people, their organized political forces, and trade unions?" He points out that the new government needs to spell out clearly and without any ambiguity a "specific" plan with a democratic basis to overcome the current crisis between the government and the opposition. Concluding, Shukri notes that what is needed is not a change of personalities, but a change of policies.

### HEROIN SEIZED WITH ISRAELI 'SPY'

Dawud Hasan, in a 500-word report on page 1 notes that 'Amir Salman, an Egyptian accused of spying for Israel, has been referred to the Higher State Security Court in Ismailia. The report notes that between 1982 and 1993, Salman was tasked by the Mosad with monitoring the movements of the Egyptian Army in Sinai, particularly in the demilitarized zones created by the Egyptian-Israeli peace agreement. When he was arrested in 1993, Salman was caught in possession of 12 kg of heroin ready for distribution. He was questioned by the Higher State Security Prosecution department in extreme secrecy. In the meantime, other security agencies were assessing how much information Salman gave the Mosad and whether other agents had collaborated with the spy.

### JOURNALIST PRESENTS DRAFT PRESS LAW TO PARLIAMENT

An unattributed 250-word report on page 1 notes that Ayman Nur, a journalist and People's Assembly member for the Wafd Party, has presented to the parliament a draft press law signed by more than 400 journalists. Nur stated that his draft law is identical in letter and spirit to that proposed by the Journalist Syndicate and approved by its General Assembly.

### EGYPTIAN-ZIONIST INFORMATION BANKS SOUGHT

A 250-word report by 'Abd-al-Hayy Muhammad on page 1 notes that Cairo University hosted "Zionist" experts for the first time during a conference on natural disasters organized by the university on 6 January. Several Israeli academicians and university professors took part in the conference along with experts from 35 Arab and foreign countries. A member of the Israeli team told AL-SHA'B that he proposed during the conference the setting up of information banks among the Middle Eastern countries to discuss ways to deal with national disasters. He noted that intensive efforts are under way to set up the first information bank between Egypt and Israel, noting that the Israeli delegation seeks to establish "active" cooperation between Egyptian anthropologists, archaeologists, and geologists in controlling natural disasters, particularly earthquakes.

### EDITOR DENIGRATES NEW CABINET MINISTERS

In a 3,000-word article on page 2, Chief Editor Majdi Husayn notes that "relief" was the natural and spontaneous reaction by the people, including the opposition, to the firing of former Prime Minister 'Atif Sidqi's government, because people got "bored and depressed" with that government and wanted to see "new faces," even if they repeat the same old "false" or "misleading" promises. Husayn points out that had the government reshuffle been more responsive to the demands of the people, the regime would have defused "popular anger" following the election "massacre," at least temporarily, thus making the opposition's job more difficult. But "fortunately" for the opposition, he adds, the regime declined to seize the chance to make "serious" changes and followed the same mentality used during the elections.

Explaining, Husayn notes that the sacking of Dr. Sidqi seemed like some sort of a "medical discharge," while

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the appointment of Dr. al-Janzuri as prime minister appeared like the "promotion" of a minister who served for 13 years, during which he also was promoted to deputy prime minister. In addition, the reshuffle keeps in office the very ministers who totally failed with their jobs, including the agriculture, transport, and social affairs ministers. He adds: "The regime's main problem is not with a certain individual." He says: "The problem is that the regime went bankrupt a long time ago and no longer has elite political leaders. What we have here is a group of civil servants and technocrats who neither speak nor understand politics." He notes that the vast majority of current and previous ministers "have nothing to do with politics," a serious flaw in officials running the country's affairs. He points out that the "rulers" in Egypt reach power by "coincidence" and without any preparation or political background. Concluding, Husayn adds: "For instance, they say that this new government will take Egypt into the 21st century, but I think there is a mistake in calculation. This government will take us to the 19th century!"

### MASHHUR WANTS CHANGE OF POLICIES, NOT INDIVIDUALS

Muslim Brotherhood Deputy Guide Mustafa Mashhur contributes a 2,500-word article on page 5 entitled "Policies, Not Individuals, Need To Be Changed." He begins by lamenting the current conditions in the Arab and Islamic countries, where there is no confidence between the majority of the people and the ruling regimes and where people are suffering from "repression," "suppression of freedoms," and "injustice." This, he adds, prompts some individuals to carry out "irresponsible acts of violence" that are wrongly pinned on Islam. He notes that this phenomenon must be analyzed not confronted with violence, which generates counter violence and does not end it. Mashhur points out that for almost two centuries a "darkness from the West" has been creeping over our Islamic countries. As a result, the Islamic nations went through a period of "weakness" and voices began to be heard saying that Islam is the cause of our "backwardness" and that progress lies in following "Western culture." For their part, he adds, the Europeans did their best to make the "materialistic life" predominate in Islamic nations, bringing to these countries their "naked" women, liquor, "wantonness," and "atheism."

Noting that Islam is the only solution to all the problems facing the Islamic nations, Mashhur notes that demanding an Islamic solution entails no violations of the Constitution, which stipulates that Islam is the country's religion and main source of legislation. He notes that when members of the "Islamic alliance" called for the implementation of the Islamic shari'ah, they were met with a "ferocious" campaign by the regime, which used its power to make "repeated" arrests and made "false" accusations against honest people, who were later tried by military courts, which handed down "harsh" verdicts on them.

Mashhur notes that an "Islamic awakening" and a strong "Islamic spirit" have started to take shape in the Islamic world, one example of which is the victory of the Welfare Party in Turkey. Mashhur points out that unlike Turkey, the Islamist candidates in Egypt were prevented by "election rigging" from winning any seats in parliament, which will become a facade for "false democracy." He adds that "cosmetic" changes within the government will not deflect the people's anger.

Masshur adds: "We tell the officials that if they are serious about reforms, domestic and foreign policies must change. The emergency law as well as all the odious and restrictive laws against freedom, the press, and parties must be repealed. A radical solution to extremism and the vicious cycle of killings must be found. The people must be truly represented in a legislative assembly. Trust between the people and their government must be restored. In addition, Egypt's foreign policy must be changed, particularly toward the Zionist enemy. There must be no flexibility on the nuclear weapons issue, the murder of the Egyptian POW's, or Jerusalem, which it seems is the subject of a serious conspiracy to Judaize it and turn it into the capital of the Zionist entity."

Concluding, Mashhur advises the regime to adopt the "Islamic solution," which he says is the only solution to which the people will respond, adding that those currently being persecuted by the regime will be the first to support such an endeavor. Mashhur ends by paying tribute to Yahya 'Ayyash, who was killed by the "Zionist enemy," thus exposing the falsehood of peace.

## Palestinian Affairs

### Plans for Release of PA Election Results Detailed

*TA1801060396 Jerusalem JMCC PRESS SERVICE in English 1930 GMT 17 Jan 96*

["Elections Update" — received via fax]

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt]

**End of Campaigning**

The Central Election Commission [CEC] issued a statement calling for an end of the election campaign to stop by Friday morning [19 January]. The Commission clarified that after this date no person will be able to

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hold any campaigning. It affirmed that there will be no campaigning on elections day in front of any voting centre or inside the centres according to the Election Law. The Commission indicated that these regulations should be followed in order to have smooth proceedings of the election. Meanwhile, in northern Gaza, the Commission moved some of the voting centres from some buildings to others.

**Vote Count**

The Central Election Commission said that votes will be counted by hand on Saturday, when the final result will be announced early next morning (Sunday). CEC member Gabi Baramki said that each polling centre will hand-count the votes and submit the results to the CEC in al-Birah Municipality. Baramki said that the PA [Palestinian Authority] President will be declared at 10 pm [2000 GMT], while the names of PA Council members will be declared at dawn, Sunday. [passage omitted]

**More on Preparations for Elections**

*TA1801121596*

[FBIS Editorial Report] Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew on 18 January carries a series of reports related to the Palestinian elections scheduled to be held on 20 January.

At 0800 GMT, the radio reports that "Major General Sha'ul Mufaz, commander of the Southern Command, has banned Israeli journalists from entering the Gaza Strip to cover the elections. Sources in the Southern Command told our correspondent that the order will remain in effect until tomorrow afternoon, at which time Gen. Mufaz will reassess the situation. Our correspondent reports that the defense establishment has received warnings about plans to attack Israeli journalists and observers. Palestinian Authority [PA] officials are furious about Mufaz's decision and say it impinges on the PA's sovereignty."

At 1105 GMT, correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem reports that "following a consultation at Mufaz's office, it was decided to allow Israeli journalists to enter the area. An Israeli press team informed us a few minutes ago that they were allowed to pass through the Erez crossing and that their names were taken down. It is not clear whether recording the names will prevent attacks on Israeli journalists."

At 0900 GMT, the radio reports: "This morning, Jerusalem District Police Commander Arye 'Amit submitted a harsh complaint to the head of the corps of observers in East Jerusalem against 10 Palestinian observers who, in contravention of the agreements, took part in a demonstration staged by the Palestinian Center for the Study of Nonviolence at Ra's al-'Amud with police approval. Our correspondent Aviv Bushinsky reports that the top observer ordered his men to leave the scene and promised the police to deal with the complaint."

At 1000 GMT, the radio reports: "As of this afternoon, the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] will bar Israeli citizens from driving through cities controlled by the PA, and they will be rerouted to other roads. This move comes as part of the preparations for the elections scheduled to be held on Saturday [20 January]."

The same newscast adds that "in Ramallah, the Palestinian security services arrested Ahmad Sadat, a prominent activist of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine [PFLP] in the West Bank. The reason for the arrest is unknown, but a Palestinian security officer told Sadat's wife that her husband would be released after the elections. Our correspondent reports that Israeli security sources believe that the terrorist attack in Hebron two days ago was perpetrated by PFLP members."

At 1100 GMT, the radio reports: "Settlers in Qiryat Arba' and Hebron have promised not to try to disrupt Saturday's elections for the Palestinian Assembly. Our correspondent Gil Litman reports that leading local settlers said at a news conference at Bet Hadassah in downtown Hebron that they intend to hold a mass prayer but not to get into any conflict with the Palestinians."

The newscast adds that "Palestinian policemen who moved from the Gaza Strip to the West Bank will vote in 16 mobile polling stations mounted on UNRWA [UN Relief and Works Agency] vehicles. Most of the stations will be placed in the West Bank and only a few in the Gaza Strip. Our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem reports that according to the Election Law, Palestinian policemen are supposed to vote in their places of residence, but the problem has now been resolved."

At 1200 GMT, the radio reports: "Thousands of Palestinian policemen are beginning to deploy in 1,200 polling stations. The deployment is being coordinated with the IDF and will continue until noon tomorrow. Brigadier General Herzl Getz, head of Israel's security committee, told our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem that 2,500 policemen will initially deploy in 800 polling stations in Area B, the rural area. In areas adjoining Israeli settlements, the Palestinian policemen are being escorted by border policemen."

The report adds that "hundreds of Palestinians demonstrated near Bet Hadassah in Hebron today, demanding the removal of the settlers from the city."

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### Disagreements With Israel on Elections Resolved

*TA1801061796 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 18 Jan 96*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Thousands of Palestinian policemen will begin deploying this afternoon at 1,200 polling stations throughout the West Bank and Gaza Strip. They will be policing Saturday's [20 January] voting. The deployment is taking place in coordination with the Israel Army and will continue through tomorrow.

A Qol Yisra'el reporter says the most outstanding disagreements between Israel and the Palestinian Authority over the elections have been resolved. It was agreed at a meeting between Major General Oren Shahor and Palestinian leader Abu-Mazin [Mahmud 'Abbas] that local municipal inspectors in Hebron would oversee the voting. They would not be in uniform nor carry weapons. Inspectors will also be deployed at polling stations in areas under Israeli control, as well as in post offices in East Jerusalem. The Jerusalem police will be responsible for security at the elections in East Jerusalem.

Meanwhile, right-wing leaders who plan to protest the holding of elections in East Jerusalem will meet today with the commander of the Jerusalem Police District to coordinate their planned demonstrations on Saturday.

### 'Arafat, Portugal's Soares Discuss 'Obstacles'

*JN1701213796 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1400 GMT 17 Jan 96*

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat has described as important and fruitful the talks he held with [former] Portuguese President Mario Soares at the Presidential Office in Jericho today. The talks dealt with Israeli obstacles to the Palestinian elections process in occupied Jerusalem and the National Authority's preparations to hold legislative and presidential elections in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and Jerusalem due to be held on Saturday, 20 January.

For his part, Portuguese President Soares — who is heading his country's delegation in charge of monitoring the Palestinian elections — stressed his country's eagerness to secure the success of the Palestinian elections without any obstacles.

## Dutch Foreign Minister Meets With Officials

### Confers With al-Husayni

*JN1701210096 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1900 GMT 17 Jan 96*

[FBIS Translated Text] Faysal al-Husayni, official in charge of Jerusalem, received Dutch Foreign Minister Hans van Mierlo at Orient House in occupied Jerusalem this evening. The meeting was attended by figures and representatives from Palestinian political forces. The two sides discussed the Palestinian-Israeli peace process and the Palestinian presidential and legislative elections due to be held on Saturday, 20 January. They especially discussed the threats by the Israeli extremist right wing to carry out acts of violence to mar the election process.

### Calls Meeting 'Fruitful'

*TA1701201896 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 17 Jan 96*

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Translated Text] The meeting in Orient House in Jerusalem between Dutch Foreign Minister Hans van Mierlo and a number of Palestinians led by Faysal al-Husayni, Jamil al-Hamami, Ghassan al-Khatib, and other figures from different political currents in the city ended a while ago. In reply to a question from our correspondent Kayid Zahir, the Dutch minister said at the end of the meeting that the visit was official and that important issues were discussed which will lead to closer Palestinian-Dutch relations in the future. He noted that the most important issued raised during the meeting were the elections and the peace process between Israel and the Palestinian Authority.

[Begin van Mierlo recording, in English] We had a very fruitful meeting, and it was informative. And as I said these meetings are very low key, and so I have no statements to make about what we discussed. [end recording]

[Begin recording] [al-Husayni] I believe that the important thing about this visit is that it expresses the fact that the Netherlands is pursuing a firm policy drawn up internally. It does not change its policy overnight. This is the meaning of this visit.

[Zahir] What were the most important issues that were discussed at this meeting?

[Al-Husayni] We discussed the peace process and elections, particularly elections in Jerusalem and the obstacles that we might face.

[Zahir] What are your expectations in terms of the percentage of voters in Jerusalem?

[Al-Husayni] We hope that the climate will be better than at present and that the Israeli authorities will be able to impose a tranquil climate in the city that will allow us to cast our ballots without harassment by the Israeli right wing. I believe that we will reach a good level of participation in the elections. [end recording]

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**Al-Za'nun Denies Israeli Allegations on Charter**

*TA1701183496 Ramallah AL-BILAD in Arabic 14 Jan 96 p 12*

[Interview with Salim al-Za'nun, acting speaker of the PNC, by unidentified correspondent; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [AL-BILAD] Israeli sources have claimed that senior officials in the Palestinian Authority are preparing the draft of a new National Charter that will replace the current charter. How true are these allegations?

[Al-Za'nun] These allegations are absolutely unfounded. They are made in order to force us to reveal our plans for convening the PNC [Palestine National Council] and to find out what we think about amending the National Charter. As speaker of the PNC, I would like to clarify the following:

Only the PNC is authorized to amend or not amend the charter. The PLO constitution provides for adopting several measures in case of changing or amending the Palestinian National Charter. [passage omitted]

[AL-BILAD] Have discussions been held on canceling or amending the National Charter?

[Al-Za'nun] The Israelis are insisting that we do so. Rabin had stated that he would halt the remaining stage of the Oslo agreement if the PNC did not amend the charter within two months of the Palestinian legislative elections. When Shim'on Peres was foreign minister he said that it would be sufficient for the elected assembly to draw up new legislation explaining that the Palestinian National Charter had been annulled.

Then the Oslo-2 agreement was reached. An article in the agreement says that the Palestinian side has to amend the charter within two months of the elections.

We have this idea. After the elections we want to deliberate with national and political forces from all factions — whether those that support or oppose Oslo — on several issues such as Jerusalem, the settlements, the refugees, and borders. We also intend to discuss ways of addressing the issue of a PNC meeting so that the PNC would act on what is required of it with regard to the charter.

[AL-BILAD] As speaker of the PNC, do you believe that there is a possibility of amending or changing the National Charter?

[Al-Za'nun] As PNC speaker, if the PLO Executive Committee submits a request to convene a special session on the issue of the charter or other issues, the regulation obligates me to call the PNC into session at a determined date and venue. My role will be limited to preserving the constitution in terms of the measures that must be adopted, as I explained earlier. Here, when the issue of amending the charter is raised, the PNC will be its own master and will make the appropriate decision.

**'Abd-al-Shafi on Amending Covenant, Elections**

*TA1801062896 Jerusalem JMCC PRESS SERVICE in English 1930 GMT 17 Jan 96*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Former head of Palestinian delegation to peace talks Haydar 'Abd-al-Shafi affirmed that the PA [Palestinian Authority] Council will not amend the Palestinian National Covenant article regarding destroying Israel, unless Israel recognizes the Palestinians right in self determination and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital.

'We are still committed to peace, but a peace that is based on justice and fairness; this requires Israel's recognition of our right to self determination, or else we will condemn anyone who wished to amend the Covenant articles,' added 'Abd-al-Shafi, who heads the National Democratic Coalition in the elections. On the reason of not running for PA presidential elections, he said that he nominated himself for the Council's membership on the basis of 'equitably working to reinforce democratic practices,' which he affirmed that it is the Council's task.

'I did not nominate myself (for presidency) because I am afraid I will win,' he sarcastically added. 'Abd-al-Shafi reaffirmed his rejection to Oslo agreement and said that it was engineered in isolation from the negotiating delegation.

But he did not see that this contradicts with his decision to run for the elections. 'I am running the elections because it is one of the Palestinian people's rights, and not because it came in the Oslo agreement framework.'

## Arab-Israeli Talks

**Al-Asad Said To Accept Israeli Concept as Basis**

*TA1801093296 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 18 Jan 96 pp A1, A2*

[Report by Aluf Ben]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad has agreed to include clauses detailing normalization in several areas in the peace accord with Israel, a senior Israel source told HA'ARETZ yesterday. According to him, al-Asad made his stand known to U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher during their meeting in Damascus last weekend.

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In the past, the Syrians accepted the principle of normalization but stated that the details will be worked out only after the peace treaty is signed and the Israeli withdrawal is completed. Israel is demanding that the peace accord stipulate arrangements for cooperation in economic areas, tourism, transportation, and more. According to the senior Israeli source, al-Asad has in fact accepted the Israeli concept which will serve as the basis for the discussions that are resuming next week.

Uri Savir, peace talks coordinator, said yesterday: "We are not absolutely clear on the Syrian stands yet, but it is clear to us that Syria is interested in signing a peace treaty with Israel in 1996."

In a meeting with the EU ambassadors in Israel, Savir said: "In the coming round of talks, we will focus on security and water. If we succeed in creating the same atmosphere of building bridges between the parties' stands that we had when we discussed the economy, normalization, and the essence of peace in the previous round of talks, we will be closer to more practical negotiations." [passage omitted]

[Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew on 18 January carries a similar report by Hayim Shibi in Washington, Ilana Baum, and ITIM on page 12, adding: "Minister Beilin said yesterday that 'the next round of talks in Maryland and the subsequent visit here by the secretary of state are the most crucial since the talks with the Syrians started in Madrid in 1991.'" Beilin maintains that the atmosphere created in Maryland and recent remarks made in Damascus "provide a chance, for the first time, of reaching peace with the Syrians in 1996, but a breakthrough on the essential issues is necessary and the process must be more vigorous than it has been so far."]

**State Department Spokesman on Syrian-Israeli Talks**

*JN1701133796 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1215 GMT 17 Jan 96*

[FBIS Translated Text] Washington—The U.S. State Department asserted that Syria and Israel want progress in talks, as well as major progress that will lead to a comprehensive peace accord.

State Department spokesman Nicolas Burns last night said that the Syrian and Israeli delegations are to hold at least five days of meetings beginning on 24 January.

He pointed out that reaching an agreement between the two sides requires very difficult and important negotiations.

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## Algeria

### GIA Snubs National Leadership, Unites With AIS

*MM1601113096 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 15 Jan 96 pp 1, 6*

[Report by Kamil al-Tawil: "Armed Group, Salvation Army Announce Unity in Western Algeria"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] London, Algeria — Field commanders of the Armed Islamic Group [GIA] and the Islamic Salvation Army [AIS] have announced unity between the two factions in western Algeria. Abderrahim Ben Khaled and Ahmed Ben Aisha, leaders of the GIA and the AIS in the western region, said in a joint statement issued on 12 January, of which AL-HAYAH obtained a copy yesterday, that the unity was forged under the GIA banner. However, they said that this "group" will be independent from the "national leadership" of the mother "Group" headed by Abou Abderrahmane Amin (Djamel Zetoui). [passage omitted]

It was not possible yesterday to confirm the content of the statement. However, Algerian Islamic sources told AL-HAYAH that the language of the AIS' western command has been very similar to that of the GIA, and that not all AIS commanders in the region agreed to the opening up policy that Islamic Salvation Front leaders tried to pursue toward President Liamine Zeroual's regime. The sources also noted that Ahmed Ben Aisha did not sign the statement issued two weeks ago by the AIS' western command.

The sources said that unity between the two groups was most likely forged in the form of a compromise, since AIS commanders agreed that unity be forged under the GIA banner, and the latter agreed to dissociate itself from the behavior of its leadership.

The statement, issued by the GIA (the shura council for the western region), said that a meeting had been held between members of the GIA shura council in the western region under Shaykh Abderrahim Ben Khaled and AIS commanders led by Ahmed Ben Aisha, and that the participants agreed to declare "the unity under the GIA banner on the basis of the jihad and adherence to the Sunnah and the Book in accordance with the venerable forefathers' line." The statement added that the participants agreed to appoint Ben Khaled as the "Group's" amir and Ben Aisha as his deputy, in addition to the appointment of some AIS members as members of the Group's shura council.

The statement said that the shura council in the western region "dissociates itself from the GIA's national leadership, which is deviating from the venerable forefathers' line." The statement urged "all the mujahidin to abandon that leadership, which has gone astray." The statement also urged members of the AIS in the western region to join the "Group." [passage omitted]

### AIS 'Regional Amir' Denies Report

*MM1701142296 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 17 Jan 96 p 4*

[Report by Salah Jamil: "Salvation Army Urges Armed Islamic Group Elements To Join Its Ranks"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] London — Contrary to reports of the announcement of unity between the Islamic Salvation Army [AIS] — the military wing of the Islamic Salvation Front [FIS] — and the Armed Islamic Group [GIA] in western Algeria, Ahmed Ben Aisha, the AIS' "regional amir," has issued a statement urging GIA gunmen to join the ranks of his organization, which he described as "the FIS' legitimate son." And it "is broader and more magnanimous for the sake of unity."

FIS sources have told AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT that the statement dated 8 January confirms that last week's report of an agreement between Ben Aisha and Abderrahmane Ben Khaled, the GIA's official in western Algeria, "is false." The sources added that the statement also stresses that "Algerian intelligence organs are behind the rumors about unity between the two organizations." [passage omitted]

The statement said: "The AIS urges all those supporting the divine march with their weapons, money, pens, and hearts to surmount all obstacles and interpretations, join the AIS, and abandon the jihad organizations that have been proved to be hostile toward the Muslim Algerian people, as they have committed religious violations during their jihad march."

Ben Aisha added in his statement that "we believe that the AIS, the FIS' legitimate son, is broader and more magnanimous for the sake of uniting all capabilities."

### FLN Dismisses Secretary General Mehri

*LD1801120896 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in French 1130 GMT 18 Jan 96*

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] There has been a major shake-up at the FLN [National Liberation Front]. Secretary General Abdelhamid Mehri and the Political Bureau have been dismissed by the Central Committee. The Central Committee is continuing its work this morning in order to solve the crisis. [passage omitted]

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**Security Forces Kill 26 'Criminals'**

*LD1701193696 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1830 GMT 17 Jan 96*

[FBIS Translated Text] A statement by the security services said today that the security forces had succeeded in killing 26 criminals in the provinces of Blida, Algiers, Batna, Jijel, Annaba, Oran, Aid Defla, and Mascara.

The security forces succeeded in recovering a quantity of weapons and ammunition during these operations.

## Egypt

**Mubarak, al-Qadhdhafi Meet at Border Area**

*NC1801102896 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1000 GMT 18 Jan 96*

[FBIS Translated Text] President Husni Mubarak arrived in Sidi Barrani [near the Egyptian border] today to hold talks with Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi, leader of the Libyan revolution, who arrived at the al-Sallum border gate a short while ago. The two will discuss bilateral relations and Arab issues of mutual interest.

Col. al-Qadhdhafi was received on arrival by Information Minister Safwat al-Sharif and Matruh Governor 'Abd-al-Mun'im Sa'id.

**Israeli Plan for Alliance, U.S. Base in Uganda Reported**

*NC1701193296 Cairo AL-SHA'B in Arabic 12 Jan 96 pp 1, 8*

[Report by Mahmud Bakri]

[FBIS Translated Text] AL-SHA'B has learned that during his recent visit to Israel, U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry discussed the establishment of a military alliance among the United States, Israel, Jordan, Turkey, and other unspecified countries. This was part of an Israeli-drafted plan that excludes Egypt.

The idea of a military alliance is based on unified military objectives for the involved countries, nonaggression, a common defense pact, and joint preparations to confront any foreign threats.

It is reported that Israel has held relevant contacts with Jordan and Turkey, and the United States received from the Israeli ambassador in Washington a detailed memorandum on them that the Pentagon has examined and analyzed. Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres explained the plan to the U.S. defense secretary during their recent talks. Peres pointed out that the alliance will serve U.S. objectives.

Israel gives top priority to the overthrow of Iraqi President Saddam Husayn with a view to paving the way for Iraq to join this alliance.

In another development, a team of U.S. military experts has begun building an advanced military base in Uganda to use for aggression against Sudan. Reportedly, the U.S. military is drawing up plans for training the Ugandan Army. The U.S. base will assist the Ugandan Army if military operations against Sudan escalate. The base will be operated by a team of U.S. experts that has already arrived in Uganda. Another team will be in charge of drafting training and operational plans for the Ugandan forces. Recently, the number of [Sudanese] rebels receiving training in various parts of Uganda has increased. Their training is being conducted by Israeli experts.

The Ugandan defense minister recently visited Cairo in an attempt to get Egypt's approval for a plan to sabotage and partition Sudan. But the Egyptian Government refused to participate in the plan.

**Shaykh 'Umar's Lawyer Calls Sentence 'Racist'**

*NC1801130996 Paris AFP in English 1214 GMT 18 Jan 96*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, Jan 18 (AFP)—The lawyer in Egypt for Shaykh 'Umar 'Abd-al-Rahman on Thursday [18 January] condemned a jail sentence handed down on the blind militant and his followers for plotting a bombing campaign in the United States.

The shaykh, 57, was sentenced to life in prison and his nine co-defendants were jailed for periods of 25 years to life by a New York court on Wednesday.

'Adil al-Laymuni, the shaykh's lawyer in his hometown of al-Fayyum, southwest of Cairo, told AFP: "It is an unjust, racist verdict which has a known political objective.

"If the American legal system allows those charged to appeal, they will surely do it," he added. The shaykh lived in al-Fayyum until he left for the United States in 1990.

Al-Laymuni declined to make any further comments, saying his client had not yet authorized him to speak about the case.

Two years ago an Egyptian court sentenced Shaykh 'Umar to seven years hard labour in absentia for leading a demonstration at which a police officer was wounded.

The armed Egyptian militant group al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyah, threatened in 1994 to exact revenge on the United States for the imprisonment of Shaykh 'Umar, its spiritual leader.

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**MB Youths Apply To Set Up Political Party**

*NC1801092696 Cairo AL-SHA'B in Arabic 12 Jan 96 p 1*

[Report by Muhammad Jamal 'Arafah and Khalid Yunus]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Party Affairs Commission on Wednesday [10 January] received papers from Muslim Brotherhood [MB] youths to establish a new political party named al-Wasat [the center]. The list of founders includes names of young MB supporters, two Copts, and four women. The representative of the party founders is Engineer Abu-al-'Ula Madi, assistant secretary general of the Engineers Syndicate. He presented 20 copies of his party's program to the officials of the Party Affairs Commission.

The list of founders does not include the big names in the MB group. The founders are mostly young men, including Salah 'Abd-al-Maqsud, a member of the Engineers Syndicate Council, and numerous trade unionists. They also include Rafiq Samuel Habib, son of Reverend Samuel Habib, the head of the Anglican community in Egypt; Dr. 'Abdallah Zayn al-'Abidin, a member of the Pharmacists Syndicate Council; Eng. Sabri Rida, doyen of the Port Said engineers; Dr. 'Isam Hasan, associate professor of Cairo University's Engineering Department; Eng. Usamah Husayn, secretary of the Aswan Engineers Syndicate; Eng. Ashraf 'Abd-al-Rahman, treasurer of the Aswan Engineers Syndicate; and Dr. Usamah Raslan, secretary of the al-Buhayrah Doctors Syndicate.

There are 74 founders, of whom 36 are professionals and 38 are workers. The party's program addresses unemployment, terrorism, slums, the new world order, and the concept of a Middle East market.

Recent reports have suggested that the MB sought to establish a new political party under various names, such as al-Amal [hope] and al-Islah [reform]. But the announcement of the party's name (al-Wasat) and the presentation of its papers to the Party Affairs Commission put an end to interpretations and speculation. The launching of the party is also a kind of reaction to remarks by the interior minister, who recently warned the MB against turning to underground activity. It is an important step and a political development stressing the group's willingness to engage in public political activity.

The MB's experiment in establishing a political party separate from the group, but not an alternative to it, is the fifth in the Arab world. Jordan's Brothers established the Islamic Action Front, Algeria's Brothers established the Hamas Party, Kuwait's Brothers formed the Constitutional Movement Party, and Yemen's Brothers joined the Yemeni Reform Grouping. There are also ideas to establish other similar parties in Gaza (al-Khalas), Syria (not yet crystallized), and Morocco (al-'Adl wa al-Ihsan).

The Brotherhood parties in Jordan, Yemen, Kuwait, and Algeria were successful; they all participated in power in one way or another. They coexisted with the governments and showed experience in this regard. This tempted Brothers in other countries to form political parties.

Many observers expect the Party Affairs Commission to reject — as usual — the formation of the new party but they also expect the founders to contest the decision before the courts.

**15 Israeli Spy Suspects Reportedly Released**

*NC1701201096 Cairo AL-SHA'B in Arabic 12 Jan 96 p 1*

[Unattributed report: "Egyptian Authorities Release 15 Israelis After Detaining Them. Higher Quarters Intervened Despite the Security Services' Objection"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Egypt's authorities recently released 15 Israeli researchers who were detained by an Egyptian vessel several weeks ago in the Ra's Muhammad area in Sinai.

The security services arrested them after their investigations showed that they were acting suspiciously and carrying out spying activities in the Ra's Muhammad area, in addition to diving there.

During the Egyptian security services' investigations of them, they claimed that they were on a scientific mission. But the Egyptian authorities did not find any documents or papers showing that the expedition had a scientific purpose.

The security services asked that they be held in custody so they could check out all aspects of their activities, especially in light of certain information that Israel's Mosad has new plans to increase spying against Egypt, particularly Egyptian military installations. The Egyptian security services suspect that this crew planted small, sensitive spying equipment in this area to monitor any future Egyptian military or civilian movements.

AL-SHA'B has learned that the Israeli Embassy in Cairo held intensive contacts with Egyptian officials and asked for the intervention of Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres, who in turn contacted Egypt's political leaders. These contacts resulted in the issuance of instructions to release them.

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The release of the Israelis comes as spying against Egypt continues. A case in point is Egyptian authorities' recent discovery of the recruitment of spy 'Amir Salman, who headed a spy network against Egypt and distributed drugs among our young people.

**Arabs Urged To Review Israel's 'Spying' Activity**

*NC1701162996 Cairo AL-AHRAM in Arabic 11 Jan 96 p 10*

[From the "Close-Up" column by Salamah Ahmad Salamah: "Coexistence With the Mosad?"]

[FBIS Translated Text] It has become clear that Israel understands peace to mean continuing the struggle, but with other means and not necessarily establishing ties of cooperation and good neighborliness, and that normalization of relations is no more than a cover for spying activities, the assassination of opponents, the planting of explosives, and drug smuggling. This is probably the type of peaceful coexistence that the Arabs should expect from Israel.

Two important developments last week confirm this. The first was the assassination of Yahya 'Ayyash, one of the Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] leaders accused by Israel of being the "engineer" behind a number of suicide operations inside Israel. It was the latter who first made the event public and congratulated itself in the same way it did when news of the assassination of Fathi al-Shaqaqi in Malta was reported a month ago.

The timing of the assassination was not random and the act was not one of revenge. It came at a decisive stage in implementing the Palestinian-Israeli agreement, namely the stage of holding the general elections that will give 'Arafat and the Palestinian Authority [PA] their legitimacy. 'Arafat has sought an understanding with the factions opposed to the Palestinian-Israeli agreement, foremost among them Hamas, in order to put an end to the differences within the Palestinians' ranks and to the violence so as to hold the elections in which the Palestinian people will exercise their political rights for the first time.

But Israel, which wants to sabotage this stage of the agreement, seized the opportunity to assassinate 'Ayyash so as to reignite the struggle between 'Arafat and his opponents, destroy the credibility of 'Arafat and the PA, and undermine the internal security situation. Thus, it will succeed in creating a climate that will distort peace still further, providing more opportunities for the traitorous Palestinian elements collaborating with the Mosad and increasing splits and wars among the Palestinians themselves.

This type of peace relations is confirmed by another event that took place in Egypt. Investigations are underway in Cairo regarding an Israeli spy recently arrested on charges of spying on military activities for the Mosad and of drug smuggling. It was no coincidence that this spy was also one of the "Palestinian collaborators" who are given cover by Israel and are sent to the hearts of the Arab peace capitals.

It is natural to hear Israel complaining about the Egyptian press' criticisms. But it is difficult to explain the Israeli state's terrorism as being a service to peace. These developments should make the Arab security services review the nature of the activities of Israel and those Palestinians collaborating with it at this stage, which proves that Israel's belief in peace is a false one.

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## Bahrain

### Amir Tells Egyptian Paper 'Everything Under Control'

*NC1801072796 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0610 GMT 18 Jan 96*

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Cairo, 18 Jan (MENA)—Bahraini Amir Shaykh 'Isa Bin-Salman Al Khalifah has stated that everything is under control in his country. We will let no one, no matter who he is, manipulate our people's fate, he said, adding that the interior minister and his capable aides have instructions to take every measure necessary to safeguard security.

The remarks were made in an interview the amir gave to Samir Rajab, chairman of the board of AL-JUMHURIYAH. The interview appears in today's AL-JUMHURIYAH.

As well as events in Bahrain, the amir touched on the current Arab situation and efforts to restore solidarity, clear the air, and resolve Arab disputes.

Shaykh 'Isa voiced his country's support for President Mubarak's efforts to clear the Arab air and end disputes. We support President Mubarak and stand by him always, because Arab solidarity is the only effective way to gather our strength and be firmer, deterring others from meddling in our internal affairs, he said. We believe in the principle of noninterference in the affairs of others, he noted. [passage omitted]

In an interview with the same paper, Bahraini Prime Minister Shaykh Khalifah Bin-Salman al Khalifah said his country enjoys stability. He said: News agencies' claims distort facts and exaggerate events. We are a small country and any small incident reverberates everywhere, he added.

But the prime minister stressed the need for caution, stating that attempts to harm the homeland's and citizens' safety are categorically rejected and that it is time to stop any acts that seek to undermine Bahrain's stability.

Shaykh Khalifah said his country supports rightfulness and does not interfere in the affairs of others and said he hopes its brothers will behave in the same way.

The prime minister was asked about the recent visit by [former amir of Qatar] Shaykh Khalifah Bin-Hamad Al Thani to Bahrain, where he was received by Bahraini leaders, and whether this has annoyed the Qatari leadership. He pointed out that Shaykh Khalifah visited the whole region and that these are traditions and customs the region has observed for centuries. We exchange visits within the framework of respect and veneration for the old, he said, adding that Shaykh Khalifah built Qatar and that only yesterday he was the amir. It is illogical for him to live as a refugee in Europe and to find us inhospitable when he visits our country, he said.

### Amir Complains About Qatari TV Broadcast

*NC1801095996 Paris AFP in English 0932 GMT 18 Jan 96*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Dubayy, Jan 18 (AFP)—The amir of Bahrain has formally complained to other Gulf Arab leaders about Qatar's television broadcast of exiled Bahraini opposition leaders, an official said Thursday [18 January].

"Official Qatari television opened its airwaves to those who want to harm a neighboring and brother country, which violates the agreements linking the Gulf countries," a Bahraini offical told AFP from Manama.

Diplomats sent by the amir, Shaykh 'Isa Bin-Salman Al Khalifah, delivered the message to the leaders of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates and Oman, which along with Qatar and Bahrain form the Gulf Cooperation Council.

A complaint was also delivered to Egypt and Syria which along with the GCC states form "the States of the Damascus Declaration," formed after Kuwait was freed from Iraqi occupation in 1991.

Qatari television, which can be seen in Bahrain, aired interviews on Saturday with two Shiite opposition members living in London at a time when Bahrain is trying to prevent violence that erupted last year from restarting.

## Saudi Arabia

### Prince: Media Speculation Based on 'False Views'

*MM1801100796 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 18 Jan 96 p 1*

[Report by Amir Taheri: "Prince 'Abdallah Tells AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT: What Is Published About Saudi Arabia Are False Views Which Will Harm No One Except Those Who Believes Them"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Riyadh — "The dogs bark but the caravans move on!." With this phrase Prince 'Abdallah Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, Saudi crown prince, deputy prime minister, and commander of the National Guard, summed up the current situation in the Kingdom and the numerous speculations circulated by the world media.

Prince 'Abdallah told AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT during a meeting at his palace in Riyadh, where he holds an open weekly meeting, that Saudi domestic and foreign

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policies "are formulated after thorough consideration," and they should not be regarded as transient measures that can be changed casually.

Prince 'Abdallah said, "we are following a fixed line, and there is no ambiguity in our stands on the various issues. We are determined to continue the policies that have given the Kingdom its strength and prosperity, God willing."

Asked about the prospects for political conditions in the region, he stressed the importance of Saudi Arabia's stability and strength within a world dominated by peace and stability.

In his statement Prince 'Abdallah repeatedly stressed that the Saudi leadership is strongly united and determined to strengthen the Kingdom and improve the living standards of all its citizens.

Asked about the economic reforms program, which includes major privatization plans, and whether it is still on the agenda, he stressed that "it still stands." Prince 'Abdallah said that some of the Western media's speculations over recent developments in the Kingdom center on "a number of false views," which will harm no one except those who believe them. [passage omitted]

**Crown Prince 'Abdallah Addresses Shura Council**

*LD1301143596 Riyadh Saudi Arabian Kingdom Radio Network in Arabic 1130 GMT 13 Jan 96*

[Announcer-read throughout]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] On behalf of King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz Al Sa'ud, custodian of the two holy mosques, His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdallah Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, crown prince, deputy prime minister, and commander of the National Guard, today opened the annual meeting of the Shura Council on the occasion of the commencement of the work of the council for the third year of its first session. [passage omitted]

After his royal highness had taken his seat on the main platform in the hall the meeting began with a recitation from the holy Koran. Prince 'Abdallah then delivered the following speech:

In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful; praise be to God, prayers and peace be on the best of the messengers. Brothers: peace and God's blessings and mercy be upon you. To proceed;

It gives me pleasure to bring to you on this lofty occasion the salutation of my brother the custodian of the two holy mosques, and his best wishes to your assembly. I would like to give you the glad tidings that his health, praise be to God, is constantly improving.

Brothers: Before I came here I recalled the speeches which were made by my brother the custodian of the two holy mosques at this esteemed council; those speeches covered our internal and external policies and our Arab, Islamic, and international relations, as well as the virtues of shura [consultation] in Islam, touching in the process briefly on the history of this young state and its founder, the father of all, King 'Abd-al-'Aziz, may God have mercy on him. I hope that we will recall those speeches at this gathering of ours and work in accordance with them. While deriving this speech of mine from the spirit of those noble speeches and the aims of this esteemed council and its legitimacy, the activities of the council come to mind, reflecting the dire need for its sincere words; I hope that you will say them because it is your trust and responsibility. Such sincere words have brought social justice in many eras of the history of Muslims among various races of mankind. Praise be to God, we are governed by a tolerant Islamic faith, which gave man a just law capable of solving the problems of mankind until the Day of Judgement. [passage omitted]

Brothers: On this occasion I would like to ask you how many questions were raised when this council was established, and how many utterances were voiced about it. But our reply to anyone who asks and seeks the truth is: Shura in Islam can only be given to a person whose word, action, view, and insight are trustworthy, and who tells the truth. This is what we understand and want, as a precaution against oversight and error during the age of political, economic, security, and media transformations. We would also like to say to you, brothers, and to every citizen: There should be no hesitation with regard to advice and consultation. We say this and we are committed to it as a service to God and his religion, and then to the homeland and to the citizens; we shall be loyal to this service, God willing. As my brother the custodian of the two holy mosques has said: The doors are opened; the hearts and minds are aware of the requirements of the citizens and the needy, God willing.

Peace and God's mercy and blessings be upon you.

His Excellency Shaykh Mohammad Bin-Ibrahim Bin-Jubayr, chairman of the Shura Council, then delivered the following speech:

In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate; Your Royal Highness Prince 'Abdallah Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz Al Sa'ud, Your Royal Highness Prince Sultan Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, your royal highnesses the princes, your eminences the ulema, your excellencies the ministers, honorable guests: God's peace, mercy, and blessing be upon you.

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Praise be to God who conferred on our country, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the honor of adhering to Islam, in laws and deeds, and who gave it, as a result of this, security, stability, and prosperity and guided its rulers to adopt the principle of consultation [shura], to adhere to it as a procedure, and to implement it because it is one of Islam's tenets of government on which our country was built since it was founded by its unifier King 'Abd-al-'Aziz, may he rest in peace. [passage omitted]

Your Royal Highness: The news you have given us about the health of the custodian of the two holy mosques, may God save him and look after him, that he is making constant progress is indeed good and excellent news to us in the Shura Council, members and staff alike, to all those present in this hall, and to all the citizens. Thanks be to God for the health and well-being he has bestowed on the custodian of the two holy mosques. We also thank you, your highness, for these good tidings and we pray God to take care of the custodian of the two holy mosques, for He [God] is generous and magnanimous.

Your Royal Highness: In line with the stipulations made in the Constitution of the Shura Council, you are attending this annual meeting of the members of the Shura Council on behalf of King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, custodian of the two holy mosques, may God protect him from harm and bestow good health and well-being upon him.

This is an occasion we look forward to every year, an opportunity to receive correct guidance and sound opinion. It is also being looked forward to with the same anticipation by the citizens, in order to learn about the achievements of their country, be informed about the ideas of their leadership, and hear the stances of the government and its internal and foreign policies.

This year, the council has been following up the eagerness of the government of the custodian of the two holy mosques to modernize the civil service and provide the opportunity for more competent people to contribute toward serving the homeland. This was done within the framework of an ambitious and ongoing policy to develop all aspects of administrative work, eliminate obstructive routine, and facilitate the citizens' affairs, fulfill their needs, and conclude their business.

The council followed up with great interest the wise government's concern to settle border disputes with and between neighbors, the great efforts made to ease the ordeals, disasters, and effects of aggression suffered by Muslims as a whole, and the government's endeavor to unite Muslims while steering the ship safely in a sea made restless by the turmoil of events.

The council also views with esteem the sound measures adopted by the state to deal with the economic conditions which the region is still suffering from as a result of its participation in the liberation of Kuwait and economic changes in the world, with a minimum of suffering by the citizens.

Your Highness, Brothers: The council was characterized by much order and clarity after completing all its internal organizations and administrative formations.

In its second year, the council held 41 sessions, during which it looked into 57 issues and made 42 decisions, and its general assembly held 22 meetings, during which it debated 80 issues. [passage omitted]

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**Baghdad To Respond To 'Call for Dialogue' on Oil**

*JN1701170196 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1615 GMT 17 Jan 96*

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 17 Jan (INA)—Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz has said that Iraq will respond to a call for dialogue on the issue of oil in exchange for food and medicine on the basis that no preconditions be imposed on us.

In a statement to INA tonight, the deputy prime minister said that through our permanent representative in New York, he yesterday asked the UN secretary general to address a message to Iraq calling on it to hold such a dialogue.

'Aziz added: We took this step in the wake of contacts held with us in recent months by the UN secretary general and several Security Council member states, which adopt a cordial or a balanced position toward Iraq and its demands.

In his statement, 'Aziz continued: Through these contacts, we sensed clear progress in the understanding of Iraq's position and objection to any condition that threatens Iraq's sovereignty and unity and interferes in its internal affairs.

'Aziz said: There is no change in our position on Resolution 986, which was rejected by Iraq. He added: We refused to deal with Resolution 986, not because it is a resolution as such, but because some of its articles threaten Iraq's sovereignty and national unity and flagrantly interfere in Iraq's internal affairs. He asserted that these are substantive issues which cannot be sold out regardless of the circumstances. He said: However, if there is another understanding of the form of dealing between us and the United Nations without undermining the constants of sovereignty and unity, it is possible to reconsider this issue.

'Aziz asserted that the contents of our message to the UN secretary general is to explore a possibility and not to change a principled position we have taken. He added: It is premature to judge the success or failure of this exploration. He recalled what was stressed by President Saddam Husayn in his speech on 6 January. His excellency President Saddam Husayn said: The people of Iraq will consider each step which implies good intentions and a balanced, sound, and legal vision regarding the significance of the Security Council resolutions and their implementation which do not have hostile implications. Our people will view such a step and those who take it with appreciation and respect, and they will increase their curse on, and confrontation of, any step which implies a hostile intention or a tendentious interpretation.

**Saddam Gives Gulf War Anniversary Speech**

*JN1701101096 Baghdad Iraq Television Network in Arabic 0803 GMT 17 Jan 96*

[Speech by President Saddam Husayn on the fifth Gulf War anniversary, in Baghdad; date not given — live or recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful. O faithful, militant, and struggling [mujahidin] children of our glorious nation, O stalwart men and honorable women in the Iraq of virtue and glory, O heroes in our valiant armed forces: God's peace and blessings be upon you.

On this day every year since 17 January 1991, it has been our custom to talk to you about the immortal Mother of Battles. In what we will say today, we do not wish to repeat some of the details of the military battle, which started on the night of 16-17 January 1991, or the meaning of the determination that achieved steadfastness in that battle in terms of the technical standards, or even in terms of the military aspect that concerns it. This is because the technical, military aspect and the meanings of faith, zeal, and blessed capability related to it can be seen within its right context by just saying that the state of the faithful Iraq — with its well known population, size, technical and economic resources, and social circumstances — was standing in one trench, while 33 states, which you all know, were standing in the opposite, hostile trench.

When the Iraqi Army, the valiant army of Arabism, was flying high the banner of Allahu Akbar [God is great], 28 armies were standing against it. Does this not suffice to clearly show the Arabs and all Muslims, and even all those who believe in God and all virtuous people in the world, the faithful military meaning, as well as the other meanings of this battle. This battle demonstrated the Iraqi people's ability for steadfastness and the high level of our valiant Armed Forces, who held out against all those technical capabilities in a unique manner.

Is there still a believer in God who imagines that such results could be achieved by Iraq fighting alone with its army? Is it not our right to believe first as we do now that God was with us and that the spirit and missionary role of our glorious nation were present in the heart of every brave fighter? Therefore, Iraq was not alone. Moreover, is it not true to say on the basis of this belief that the battlefields were filled with our grandfathers, the bearers of the black, white, and green banners, whose souls rose from their graves to fight alongside their sons and grandsons—the bearers of rifles, guns, and rockets, and operators of air and ground missiles, and pilots? Yes, by God, that is how we believed and how we

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viewed things, not according to what was actually seen in the normal sense, but according to a special view linked to what we deeply believed in so that faith would illuminate hearts, minds, and consciences and inspire hope in inevitable victory and joy of martyrdom.

Faith began from within us in great Iraq, the citadel of faith. It did not come from outside. This is the faith Iraq has willed for the believers to do what is extraordinary, and to conceive everything possible through the will of faith which acts as a driving force in life.

Therefore, ours is a faith based on ethics, not inheritance. It is the faith of those who make the image they desire a brilliant one, and not the faith of those who are waiting for the image they desire to fall to them from the sky. It is the faith of those who create the image of the society in which they believe, and not the faith of those who give in to the reality of the society they inherit. The faith of those who face the calamity by relying on God, and not the faith of those who surrender to calamity, thinking that God will ease it without believing that that calamity can be eased, without doing what they have to do in that regard, and without preparing to face it in the way any effective faithful person would face it.

On the basis of this faith and its meaning, the Iraqis saw in their minds and hearts that God supports them. On the basis of their faith and its meaning, the Iraqis imagined — as if they were seeing with their own eyes — our forefathers, the companions of Prophet Muhammad, with their white, black, and green banners standing alongside them in the battlefield to fight corruption, injustice, tyranny, infidelity, and degeneration while seeking the help of God, the all merciful and Almighty, and waving the great banner of Allahu Akbar.

Throughout the long history of mankind, the enemies of nations sought to weaken the ability, will, and resolve of the target nations by concentrating on their points of weakness. After monitoring and specifying these points, and after establishing the way to approach them, the enemies may direct their stabs to the right place in the body to weaken the soul, or they may directly attack the soul to weaken both the soul and the body. However, the approach of attacking the weak points of a nation — which the enemies of nations may follow to achieve their objectives — may not always be the most dangerous approach as far as the target nation is concerned. In several cases, it may be the least dangerous as far as the target nation is concerned. An enemy attack against a dynamic army though its weak points may prompt such an army to employ its elements of strength to bridge the gaps in order to better confront the enemy and neutralize its attacks and hostile plans.

Nations — whose points of weakness are targeted by the enemy to reach vital targets — mobilize the factors, components, and assets of their strength to reduce and narrow their weak gaps. This is possible if these nations have good leaders and if their people are fully alert at the appropriate time. Thus, the enemy's approach toward a nation's points of weakness to aim its arrows at this nation will make the nation or people mobilize the factors of their strength to do their utmost effectively. The nation will then stand up to reassume its cultural role or to assume a new cultural role.

However, what is more dangerous to nations and people is when the enemy mainly focuses its efforts on the factors of their strength, not factors of strength, and when its plans are based on having access to the grounds, sources, and main factors of a nation's strength. What is more dangerous also is when the enemy's methods and arrows are all aimed at waging a decisive battle, or the decisive battle, with a nation on this basis.

Why is this more dangerous? This is more dangerous because if nations — like armies — lose balance in terms of the factors of their strength, the factors of their weakness, or the factors with less strength, cannot restore these nations' balance. They also cannot restore their balance at the appropriate time. Thus, in long wars, the main factors of an army's strength are kept far away from the daily clashes on the front so that these factors will be used, at the right time and in the appropriate method, in decisive battles, or in the battles whose results are significant.

In brief battles, however, a predominant force would most likely use a different method to achieve maximum superiority and results in a short time. But, since enemies attack living nations by targeting their strong points, this method does not produce the results which the enemies seek from their plans in that short time. Thus, the attempt of the enemies to overwhelm the points, or rather the base, of the nation's strength tends to call for a long breath policy.

Consequently, the enemies have discovered that the base of the Arab nation's capability, vitality, and influence lies in the nobility of its cultural role, and that this cultural role is essentially a comprehensive one, not restricted to one or two aspects. They have also discovered that the Arab nation's history is the longest among all the nations of the world, and that God Almighty has singled out this nation by choosing His emissaries from it so that they will be witness over it, and so that the nation itself, through its faithful and men of initiative and virtue, shall be witness over the whole of mankind.

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The nation's great culture, cumulative experience from a long history, and comprehensive and great humanitarian and spiritual role have enabled the nation to grow deep roots in the ground which are difficult to extract. They have made every factor of strength we have mentioned and every significant incident in its long history most significant. The cultural role has rings and meanings which are most significant. The weight and resolution of this role are also most significant.

On our subject today and on this occasion — the occasion of the immortal Mother of Battles — what is more meaningful and effective and what is more deeply entrenched and expressive of the nation's role on the national and humanitarian levels for the sake of achieving its great unity are the culture, the capability, the spiritual role, and the Arab mission in it. The most prominent in all of this is the collective role of the Arabs as a single nation in the Islamic message.

Given this fact, and because Iraq is the nation's forward post in terms of capability, foreign enemies targeted it. What must we draw attention to what must we repeatedly warn against? First, the Arabs must believe and understand, which is possible when their faith is at its best, that life is a prerequisite of faith, just as faith is a prerequisite of life. For it is impossible to conceive of humane criteria, and of a role for faith when there is no life. That is why God has created man in the best of molds. Life without faith is an absurd life that is lacking in virtue and in a commendable and constructive human role. If the Arabs' faith lives up to this conception, and if they recall their vision, role, the need for them to make an effort in life, and their relationship with their fellow human beings and God, most gracious, and most merciful, they will do well.

Based on their faith, Iraqis have understood their role as well as their relationship to the merciful God and their fellow human beings, thanks to the principles of the Ba'th Party, even though these principles address life on earth and do not attempt to interpret any religion. That is why they have established a linkage with the nation's strengths in the best possible manner. Due to this communication, the faithful pan-Arab role in life, and the accomplishments achieved thanks to the Iraqis' strengths, the enemy, in the immortal Mother of Battles, targeted Iraq, which is the nation's power base and center of its faith at present. And because Iraqis have learned the nation's lessons of attack and retreat, and are aware of its weaknesses and strengths, they recalled their utmost potential, mobilizing their utmost heritage, cultural role, and faith. Consequently, they have defeated the enemy by preventing it from eliminating the faithful nation's power base, its most wide- ranging and influential center of excellence, and its new model for acting on the laws of the age and rehabilitating the values of the immortal heritage. Thus, thanks to God, Iraqis have prevented the enemy from eliminating the nation by way of attacking its source of additional strength at this phase with a view to destroying the living example in it for some time. So, God has warded off all that could have hurt the Arab nation and weakened its status and role.

The foreigners, who harbored evil intentions toward us, as well as the colonialists, tried to preoccupy us to keep us from learning from what is written in the divine books, the biography of Prophet Muhammad, and the thinkers' interpretations to build our country and face difficulties. Today, they are trying — through the wrong acts of some Arabs in dealing with this eternal heritage — to harm religion by depicting the wrong examples as if they represent Islam or as if they show the way religion is understood in the East. They do so when generalization serves their purposes.

On the other hand, they push those who are vulnerable to mistakes to face enemies' fanaticism with counterfanaticism based on a narrow vision and acts that are not inspired from the religious heritage in terms of spirit and examples when the Arabs assumed their duties and responsibilities with right understanding and behavior. Thus, they are depriving the Arabs of their broad human role and their concept of mankind which exists in their religion and eternal, new pan-Arab principles.

The most important thing in each mission is not the soundness of its course in general, but the human examples which attract those far and near and the tangible indication that this course is right and that those who are carrying its banner are honest and faithful to its human dimension, not national dimension only.

When the Arabs fail to present their faithful examples in a right way, or when they fail to materialize these examples, they will lose or kill the opportunity after the tendentious foreign media, particularly the Western media, distort these examples. Thus, the Arabs will lose the effect of the most important thing in the spiritual and historic force of their eternal heritage after they damage this heritage, or after the enemies succeed in penetrating into their ranks. The Arabs will harm this heritage when they deviate from its meaning and examples.

Then, what should we draw the attention of the larger nation to in the age of ignorance, inability to realize intellectual creativity and dialogue, and failure to perform the role of a faithful, enlightened person. The Arabs have done injustice to themselves when they lagged behind their role and its meanings. They may have also done injustice to themselves when they drew such a picture of the Arab and his role when he conveyed Islam

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to them. Thus, many people made a mistake in describing the truth about the Arab and his historic role. They made a mistake when they failed to understand exactly the difference between what God Almighty has wished to occur through His absolute will and without any mediators, and the role which God had wished the faithful individual to play, and when they failed to act accordingly.

When the Arabs were in such a state of affairs, they portrayed the events of the Arab-Islamic history in a partial, fatalist way. When they went too far in this conception, they deprived the Arab of his creative role and distinguished ability in the making of those events. We know that the believers must, first of all, believe both in God and in His ability, not only to create the universe, but also in His ability to govern the general laws of life and its basic principles. However, the question that must be asked: How should the believers and mujahidin understand this? How should they understand the role which they can play when God bestows on an individual faith and tasks him with a great role to play in life to create a basic part of its principles and directions, and when God makes the individual a leader or intellectual and creative figure in life.

God chose the Arabs to be a leading nation to promote faith. He also chose the Arabs to be leaders in events — in terms of making certain events and adjusting and preventing others. When God chose the Arabs to play such a role, he chose them for their qualities, which may be crystallized on the basis and in the directions which God Almighty knows.

Thus, through their faith, the Arabs are in a better position to not only form a concept of the new world they seek — a world which goes beyond what is felt and seen to something more superior — but also to prepare themselves for jihad and sacrifice, which are essential for carrying out their leadership mission, understanding their role, and securing what they want after placing their trust in God Almighty.

Therefore, we can say that two main principles govern the glorious Arab Islamic history and its events. The principle which God Almighty wished for the Arabs, and the principle which stemmed from the faith in their hearts and enhanced their significance and ability to influence. In this capacity, the Arabs became personally capable, after depending on God, of giving and creating. In fact, they became more solid and distinct in thinking and taking action.

However, when the Arabs abandoned the principle concerning their giving, intellectual and practical creativity, and capability in the field of jihad and sacrifice, and attributed all their victories, construction, setbacks, and failures to fate — thus showing poor understanding of the meaning of fate and losing all will power — they belittled themselves and their old and new roles and old and new history. They could no longer comprehend that Man could still regain his principles and ability for action and creativity. They imagined, among other things, that their situation after abandoning their role and life was due to God's indignation, not their own failure to perform the leading role which God bestowed on them. They could not imagine the possibility of resuming that role and regaining the ability to create and excel after depending on God and their deep faith in the role which God wished for them as leaders of mankind.

The Arabs implicitly belittled themselves when they belittled their role. Consequently, the others belittled them, too, and no longer believed they had a role to play. Thus, the West misjudged the Arabs and their capabilities. However, when the moment came for true interaction with Arab culture and the pillars of faith and obligations entailed by the present and future role as willed by the Almighty God for the Arabs and as chosen by the Arabs for themselves and humanity, the Arab willpower sprang up in Iraq in a manner that surprised both the Arabs and others.

The surprise is still big and will remain so until those concerned soundly understand the new capabilities, including the level of the new role and the nature of the capability that relies on Almighty God, as well as the nature of the great sacrifice, patience, and faith. The Arabs' view of themselves will change only after they take up their role, and then, the way the other nations view them will change, too. This will happen only after pleasing God, the merciful and compassionate, once they do what satisfies them through their faithful will and not the will of the foreigner.

With respect to their faith, life, and role, and in their search for the path of awakening, some Arabs are making mistakes in figuring out the right beginning despite the fact that the intention, in general, is sound. They are showing their vision and deeds, as if it is an attempt to return to the past at a time when what is required is to correct the present situation and to move toward the future with firmness and belief.

The rising Arabs do not need to go back to the past and seek protection within its ancient walls. They need to draw a picture of what is required by the present so that it may become a safe base and a sound springboard toward their bright future. Therefore, what is required is that the rising Arabs should choose the right path that depicts the state of awakening as a process of progress for the nation. The nation, according to its position and influence, will thus present a model that helps mankind

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be in a state of balanced progress and development, contrary to its present situation and failure to envisage the right concept and method.

Based on mistakes made by some Arabs in both concept and deed, some Western quarters with suspect, premeditated aims are keen to depict the Arabs as though they were in a state of retreat to the past and not in a state of shaping a new present and future. On the basis of these mistakes, they deliberately brand them as fundamentalists. Arabs need the past basically inasmuch as the past religious and pan-Arab depth represents a heritage and serves as examples of the various stages. This helps them live their present and explore the future in the same spirit demonstrated by Arabs in previous generations. God has willed this for the Arabs and for others. God has chosen the Arabs for a mission to themselves and to mankind, not to adopt or convey all previous models or examples. or all that was required here and there in past policies.

Arabs need to build the society of present and future stages on the basis of laws chosen by believers in an intellectual and practical manner that is far more developed than that of previous generations. Otherwise, their concepts and actions would be a mere repetition of previous stages. Arabs would thus lose their ability to develop, and would at best revolve, if not stagger, around earlier models, ideas, and methods. Repeating past stages at best would mean living in the past, if not actual regression.

Therefore, going back to the past instead of moving forward is considered to be a retreat rather than progress. This is what the tendentious ones have in store for the Arab nation, and for all Muslims in general. They want to turn them away from the path of progress. When faithful Arabs accord faith and principle their true meaning, it will become clear that the present Arab state of awakening is but an expression of their renewed faith after having chosen the path of faith and the aims of this historical stage.

There is no one who can prevent them from embracing faith, when certain actions are interpreted as the tenets of faith. Moreover, there are no open attempts to prevent them from applying these tenets. As a matter of fact, the enemies need allies from among the nation's ranks in order to shackle the nation, to prevent it from moving forward, and to justify their regressive act on the grounds that they need to confront those who uphold rigid principles enshrined in heritage. Arabs should not allow those with ulterior motives to achieve their lowly purposes by using the Arab religion against them. To achieve this objective, Arabs should mobilize their faithful and creative pan-Arab spirit, which upholds the creation of a leading humane role for a unified nation in a single country along the path of creativity with a great determination to pursue the quest for progress, after relying on the one God. The pursuit of such a path would constitute the nucleus for excellence and offer a good example to be emulated by all faithful people, wherever they are, God willing.

The Mother of Battles has helped Arabs everywhere strike a balance so that they may choose their new path to faith, which must be in vibrant touch with their great spiritual and historical heritage. Nonetheless, some have remained at the starting line of their chosen path, even though the pursuit of this path might have entailed some mistakes, notwithstanding the good intentions involved. Good intentions should entail a desire to fight deviation and conspicuous corruption in Arab communities. When Arabs failed to play their leading creative role, which is in line with the great significance of their messianic faith, no one managed to fill the vacuum, even when good will was demonstrated. Even when individuals from other nations attempted to play the role of teacher to the Arabs, to all Muslims, and to all faithful people, regardless of their faith, the best they could produce was to make some Arabs memorize texts enshrined in heavenly books, prophets' biographies, and a special aspect of the past, to the exclusion of others.

Despite their good-intentioned attempts, they could not raise the worth of their nations, and they will not be able to raise the worth and position of the Arabs. The Arabs and others do not want to learn these texts by heart or to emulate those who do so. What they need is a belief in their role to shake the dust from their souls and remove the rust from their principles in order to establish the criteria for a sound awakening based on strong foundations and balanced examples for their present situation. There are great examples in the past of belief in this role and its balanced path. What Arabs need today for themselves and for mankind is not to copy from the past the policies of implementing principles, but to comprehend their implications for now and for the future and to create an appropriate policy in light of these with an enlightened mind which understands the facts of this stage.

What Arabs need today is not to bring the past to the present, but to turn the past into deep roots for the present, and to turn the present time into a base for the future and genuine roots for it. What the Arabs need is not to understand the present in order to surrender to it or to copy the experiments, policies, and examples of others as they are, but to know the present time, to understand it as it is, and to build on it a bridge toward human interaction with confidence and enlightenment, not with a mentality which lacks confidence and which

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shakes from fear of the broader environment, or with the mentality of a weak, lost person who gives up the leading role to others when he loses confidence in himself and in the possibility of playing a special, creative role in today's world.

Surrender to the past is a danger to the Arabs and their role in the present and the future, just as surrender to the present in its entirety is a danger to their present, past, and role, because it distorts their personality. Transferring the past to the present and dealing with the present in its entirety distort the role of the Arabs and end their creative thought and policy of reforming the present.

Many of the faithful, who learned the Holy Koran and the prophet's traditions by heart, lived and died during the past six or eight centuries. However, despite all they learned, they could not restore Baghdad, Cairo, Damascus, al-Qayrawan, or any of the big Arab cultural centers to their previous national and humanitarian spiritual role; nor could they restore the old spirit of the Arabs. Baghdad, Cairo, Damascus, al-Qayrawan, and the other Arab cultural centers remained captive to backwardness and the designs and wishes of the enemy.

What is required of the Arabs is to study as much as they can in order to comprehend the meanings of the message, the traditions, and the models and policies which strengthened the nation's unity and role in the past, so that they can discover the new path which will connect their past with their present and take them to a greater future.

When the heavenly missions descended successively on different emissaries from among the Arabs in the name of God, they came to bestow on Arab faith its renewed meaning, or to strengthen Arab faith with the new faith in those heavenly missions. They also came to depend on the Arabs due to their known peculiarities, or to place them on the correct path so that they would play a leading spiritual role toward themselves and mankind. Therefore, all Arabs today are believers in God, His books, and emissaries, each according to his own belief. This is not what we basically want today, because this is what we and successive generations have inherited from our predecessors, which is deeply entrenched in our hearts.

What is required of the Arabs today is to choose and exercise their role in the same spirit as their national and humanitarian role, which was inspired by the bright lights of their glorious history. Therefore, what Arabs must do today is not just study the past, but know what is required by the past so that they can understand their correct role in the present and the future. What is required of the Arabs today is not only to believe in God, His books, His emissaries, and Doomsday, since they already believe in these things which came down to them from their fathers and forefathers who believed in them as well, but also to believe in the message and their role in it, and to rise up to its level. They should prepare themselves to play this role correctly, according to the correct formulas and for the correct aims. This role should be for the present and the future, not for the past. It should be a rebellion and a revolution against the incapacity, weakness, deviation, and corruption of the present and not a surrender to this present. The Arabs are called upon to believe in fate so as to understand the great role which God destined for them, not just to affirm that God Almighty exists and has great power.

Arabs will achieve their new faith in a creative manner when they choose its new path, new aims, and action to match. Therefore, the Arabs must not detain their souls in heaven and deprive earthly life of them, or mortgage themselves to life on earth and deprive life and soul of the blessings of heaven. In our culture, it is important when we are faced by a state of deterioration or backwardness to turn to reading the heavenly books. But Muslims used to read the Holy Koran and the prophet's traditions by way of memorizing them, not by deriving lessons for the present and future which would help them assume the necessary leading role thata will change the present for the better.

Regardless of whether this approach is meant to distract efforts with a view to keeping Arabs from examining what needs to be examined to bring about the nation's renaissance, or whether it is only a manifestation of inadequacy caused by the absence of the collective role and ascendant acts, or by the failure of some alien minds, which addressed certain aspects of religion in the Arab environment at the time, this approach has adversely hurt religion and the way to handle it, and this hurt is proportionate to the purposeful and malicious acts the foreigners have carried out against Arabs to cause them to go backward and keep them from playing their role in life. So, the Arabs have failed to understand their religion, life, and their leading role in it. The end result is that the great communication between them and the values they were meant to cherish by God, most gracious and most merciful, was interrupted for some time. Consequently, their sun set after they obscured their leading role, which they should have played on earth.

O zealous Iraqis; O glorious Iraqi women; O lofty personnel within the ranks of our valiant Armed Forces: O honorable Arabs:

In the immortal Mother of Battles, which was accompanied by an unfair and painful blockade, lionhearted

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Iraq sustained wounds in the battlefield. This caused the ravens, jackals, and hyenas near and afar to think that Iraq, the country of faith and jihad, was on the brink of collapse. That is why the person assigned the task of howling and shouting began to do so at a faster pace to call others so that his ilk would gather around him. They began to articulate obnoxious calls and maneuver in clownish and pathetic moves that showed stupid minds, not to mention the disgust entailed. This continued until the Great March Day [reference to Iraqi presidential referendum on 15 October 1995], on which lionhearted Iraq showed its strength as well as its graceful resilience and understanding to the entire world.

Thus, the despicable ones realized that their hopes and wishful thinking have come to naught. Nonetheless, one of them has continued to make discordant utterances, because he fell victim to erroneous calculations. The Great March Day removed his cover. So he needed some time to remedy his situation. In the state of desperation he is experiencing, he has no choice but to collapse in the dark after losing his sense of direction. He is no longer guided by the light of God and the light of truth after he put out the light within his own soul.

Some observers say these types of people— some of whom are officials in their countries—did what they did not out of ignorance of the facts or their inability to distinguish between darkness and light. Indeed, these people became vulnerable to the foreigners after becoming their subservient agents. After the foreigners' schemes against Iraq failed, including the 30-state aggression, they gave instructions to them so they could carry out with submissiveness and humility the things you have heard and known about. They will not stop until the foreigners—not they—become desperate, or until the foreigners find that their interest dictates taking another road. Therefore, their barking and clownish, pathetic maneuvers will continue for some time. Of course, after the Mother of Battles, the enemies dropped a lot of their fig leaves and masks, and jeopardized many of those on whom they secretly depended for many years by exposing their roles.

Lionhearted Iraq will continue to be in good shape and dear and noble to its kinfolk, brothers, and all good and faithful people in the world, God willing. The lion will remain a lion, and the jackals, foxes, and hyenas will remain as they are.

O zealous men of Iraq and the Arab nation, you recall that not all Arab countries took the same position during the war between Iraq and Iran in the glorious al-Qadisiyah. You also recall that not all Arabs were at the same level in terms of their stance on Iraq — even those who adopted a position close to Iraq's position. Furthermore, you recall that Libya was among those Arab countries that adopted a position against us and in support of Iran. You also recall that it was Libyan missiles which hit Baghdad after they were sent from Tripoli to Iran.

Despite all this, and when the war ended and an Arab summit was held in Baghdad in May 1990, brother Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi was late and did not show up at al-Muthanna Airport in Baghdad until after we started the meeting. Most Arab kings and presidents, as well as all representatives of those who did not show up, except for Syria's representative, attended this summit.

I say that when I was informed that the plane of brother Col. al- Qadhdhafi was in the air, I asked the permission of the brother Arab kings and presidents to leave the meeting in order to welcome Col. al-Qadhdhafi. This made it necessary to suspend the meeting until we returned to it together—something which actually took place. I embraced brother al-Qadhdhafi at the plane's ramp as though everything had been forgotten.

Since that day, we have not implicitly or explicitly revealed Libya's official position, and we have not blamed any of the Libyan officials, because we enjoy the good manners of the Arabs and also because we comprehend the biography and the good manners and characteristics of the good ancestors. Therefore, if anyone finds himself desirous of making a fresh start, there is no room for anything but for tolerance and for the removal, from the road, of what used to be a negative aspect in the past.

Based on these implications, we will help anyone who wants something to help guide him along the road. We will first help him help himself, so that he will be in a position to seek guidance. We hope that this will not whet the greed of those who take advantage of Iraq's good manners and of its characteristic forgiveness and departure from trivialities, and that they will not do more harm.

Lionhearted Iraq is in good shape, and it has a future as a living part of its glorious nation. Likewise, Iraq has a present with great implications. Those who are prone to delusions should not be deluded. Those who have lost heart should remember that Iraq is still capable of addressing their pitfalls, and is also capable, thanks to its strength and ability, after depending on God, of giving them whatever strength and capability they need so that they may reject what should be rejected and accept what should be accepted and what strengthens them. God is a great witness.

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At some stage of the al-Qadisiyah battle—more specifically at two stages: one in 1982, when we withdrew from Iran and the Iranians called for the invasion of al-Basrah; and the other in 1986, when the Iranians occupied the city of al-Faw, the city of sacrifice and the gate of the great victory; some of our brothers, who were closer to our position than others, were confused, and clouds gathered around the sun before their eyes so that they no longer saw what was possible, or believed that the sun would rise again after a brief absence. Even some of them, who used to visit us frequently, arranged their alliances and asked for forgiveness for their positions on this issue or that.

During those difficult times, which were no less difficult than these times and which some people consider to have been more difficult, I used to tell Arab officials that we did not expect the sun to rise because it had not set in the first place. I used to say that the sun took its brightness from the faith of the Iraqis, whose hearts and minds were full of faith, and that because they were strong on the path of righteousness, victory was for us.

Against this background and its implications, I tell certain Arab officials and all the brothers to remember this: remember that the blind man is he who has no faith; that he who has faith is endowed with eyesight; that the sun has not set; that God knows what is in hearts; that the future is for those who sow the seeds of good and great things; and that those who live long are those who satisfy God and who are proud of their own deeds before themselves, history, and the nation.

Sugarcoating bad deeds with glossy words in the name of delivering the Iraqi people from their suffering or alleviating their hardships has not and will not deceive the Iraqi people who, despite their ordeals, have made their point and had their say on the Great March Day. How can they imagine that they could deceive the people, that they could sweeten the venom with words to pass it along to the other sons of our glorious nations in other countries?

God Almighty taught us that when he forgives it is because he is most forgiving, most compassionate. Let others take this example. We will be thus guided, God willing.

We apologize to our Arab nation's masses, because a large part of them will find themselves unable to absorb some of the details of what we have discussed in this speech, where the intellectual trend prevails. We are addressing ourselves to the Arab intellectuals in particular, as well as to the general body in the nation as a whole. Any intellectual who is possessed with the Satan of a deviating culture and in whose areas of weakness Satan finds a place, will be more effective in dealing out harm and deviation and in spreading negative phenomena in the nation's life. Nevertheless, there is a good chance for the good leader among the Arab intellectuals. The notion of a good leader is more effective in life and society if it is given a chance. We base our assumptions on this aspect.

Based on the above, the enemies have always targeted the nation's intellectuals and eminent men in political, cultural, and popular circles, because the enemies target the nation either by selecting the elements of its strength or by addressing the elements of its weakness. The intellectuals today, are as they have always been throughout history, are a living part of the nation's strength. They can be the most serious links in its weakness if they become weak. The nation's enemies are targeting the faithful pan-Arab culture as they are targeting the faithful, pan-Arab intellectual. Because this effective circle will be greatly beneficial if it is built, observed, and looked after in a proper way, what comes out of it could become a great evil if it is neglected and if proper care, attention, and protection are not forthcoming. And because the collective conscience of our nation is the entire nation's conscience, we are confident of our masses' ability to interact with this conscience and absorb its main components.

Greetings to the Arab intellectuals, mujahidin, and strugglers, and those who carry their banners aloft. Glory and mercy to our Arab nation's martyrs, and to the believers everywhere.

Long live Iraq; long live faithful, patient, and sincere Iraq, which is a country trusted to safeguard the nation's principles and the sincere principle of patriotism. Glory, loftiness, and paradise to the martyrs of the immortal Mother of Battles. Long live the patriotic, pan-Arab, and trustworthy Iraqi Army, which has offered up chaste blood in defense of the nation and its path.

Long live Palestine, free and Arab. God is great, God is great. Accursed be the lowly ones.

**Saddam's Son Qusayy Survives Assassination Attempt**

*LD1701221796 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 2101 GMT 17 Jan 96*

[By Aleksandr Antonov]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] CAIRO, January 17 (Itar-Tass) — An attempt was made on the life of Qusayy, a son of Iraqi President Saddam Husayn, on Wednesday [17 January]. Qusayy had an narrow escape whereas some of his bodyguards were killed as a grenade exploded in a palm grove 46 kilometers away from Baghdad.

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On receiving the news, Saddam ordered an investigation among his son's "entourage" where the plotter may be found, reports say.

Qusayy is chief of Iraq's security forces.

**French Parliamentary Delegation Continues Visit**

**Confers With al-Sahhaf**

*JN1701190296 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1540 GMT 17 Jan 96*

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 17 Jan (INA)—Foreign Minister Muhammad Sa'id al-Sahhaf this morning received Jean-Bernard Raimond, former French foreign minister and head of the Foreign Affairs Committee at the French National Assembly, and his accompanying delegation, currently on a visit to Iraq.

The foreign minister and the guest delegation discussed issues of mutual interest, including the recent developments between Iraq and the UN Security Council, as well as the recent French proposal on sending a mission to Iraq to prepare a report on the current humanitarian suffering of the Iraqi people, and U.S. and British attempts to divert the French proposal from its humanitarian objective.

Al-Sahhaf pointed to Iraq's implementation of its commitments which are stipulated by the Security Council resolutions. He asserted that the Security Council should fulfill its commitments toward Iraq, including Paragraph 22 of Resolution 687, in order to lift the economic blockade imposed on Iraq.

Al-Sahhaf also briefed the guest delegation on contacts held recently between Iraq and the UN secretary general on exploring the possibility of exporting quantities of Iraqi oil to purchase food, medicine, and other basic civil needs.

He pointed out that the UN secretary general was informed that Iraq does not object to holding a dialogue to explore this possibility on the basis that no preconditions are imposed on Iraq.

Jean-Bernard Raimond voiced his understanding of al-Sahhaf's briefing, and stressed the desire to enhance and coordinate efforts in order to expedite joint action designed to end the embargo imposed on Iraq.

Foreign Minister Muhammad Sa'id al-Sahhaf asserted that Iraqi authorities welcome the French delegation's visit, and that a program including many visits and meetings was worked out for the delegation during its stay in Iraq.

The meeting was attended by Dr. Riyad al-Qaysi, under secretary of the Foreign Ministry; the head of the First Political Department at the Foreign Ministry; and the head of the French Interests Section in Baghdad.

**Holds 'Cordial' Talks With 'Aziz**

*JN1701210696 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1925 GMT 17 Jan 96*

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 17 Jan (INA)—Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz today received a French National Assembly delegation led by former French Foreign Minister Jean-Bernard Raimond.

'Aziz gave a comprehensive review of Iraq's relationship with the Security Council, as well as of the real reasons why some parties, particularly the United States, insist on continuing the unjust blockade on Iraq and rejecting any attempt to ease or lift it.

He also pointed out that this arbitrary position, which is an immoral and illegal violation of all bases, values, and norms in international relations, is the primary reason for the Iraqi people's suffering.

During the meeting, which was held in a frank and cordial atmosphere, they also discussed Iraqi-French relations. Both sides stressed their desire to return these relations to their previously prosperous state in order to serve the national interests of both countries and peoples.

The French delegation includes deputies Jean-Marc Nesme from the Union for French Democracy, and Michel Fromet from the Socialist Party. The meeting was attended by Dr. Riyad al-Qaysi, under secretary of the Iraqi Foreign Ministry, and the head of the French Interests Section in Baghdad.

**Saudi Prisoner Released, Returns Home**

*JN1701124496 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1150 GMT 17 Jan 96*

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 17 Jan (INA)—The Iraqi authorities today returned a Saudi national, Munif Sulyaj Miruj Shuradi, to his country via the Safwan border post.

The Saudi national's release was coordinated with the International Committee of the Red Cross mission in Baghdad. The release was in accordance with Iraq's decision in September 1995 to pardon Arab prisoners from serving the remainder of their jail sentences.

The Saudi national was arrested after entering Iraq illegally. He faced trial at the competent Iraqi courts and was sentenced to eight years in jail in accordance with Article 24 of the Residency Law.

In accordance with the same pardon decision, the Iraqi authorities released in December 1995 a Saudi

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national, Hamad 'Unayzan Muhammad al-'Utaybi, who was serving a two-year jail term for entering the country illegally. Four other Saudi nationals and three Kuwaitis were released according to the same decision.

It is worth mentioning that President Saddam Husayn on 8 August 1995 ordered the release of 26 Egyptian convicts, who were serving various terms in jail in accordance with Article 446 of the Penal Code and Paragraph 31 of the said article.

**Paper Publishes New National Assembly Law**

*JN0101121396 Baghdad AL-THAWRAH in Arabic 28 Dec 95 p 3*

["Text" of National Assembly Law No. 26 for 1995 issued by the Revolution Command Council on 27 December]

[FBIS Translated Text] Brothers, the Revolution Command Council [RCC] today issued a new National Assembly Law No. 26 for 1995. The issuance of this law comes in implementation of directives by his excellency the president leader, may God protect him, to enhance the democratic march and entrench the establishment of constitutional institutions as the National Assembly is a basic pillar of this march and splendidly embodies all the meanings and values of popular participation that were etched by Saddam Husayn's glorious al- Qadisiyah and the immortal Mother of Battles.

The existence and history of the National Assembly reflect the principle of equality among the citizens without any religious or ethnic discrimination and without giving any special political or social privileges based on private ownership as a means to obtain National Assembly membership. The Assembly has been in existence for 15 years during which, thanks to its historic leadership, Iraq has made advanced steps on the road to democratic construction that was crowned by the day of the great march on 15 October 1995, a day when the lofty Iraqi people voiced their abidance by their principles and their complete loyalty to their leader, President Saddam Husayn in the glorious popular referendum which enhanced the momentum of democractic legitimacy and gave it its humanitarian and principled meanings on the broadest level.

The law comprises 91 articles in five parts that deal with the makeup of the National Assembly, election to it; the Assembly's legislative, monitoring, consultative, and organizational prerogatives; and the functioning of the Assembly. This law comes in the wake of the local people's councils law issued a few days ago to splendidly crown the democratic march and philosophy whose principles and bases are inspired by the thoughts of leader Saddam Husayn.

In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate.

The Republic of Iraq

In the name of the people, the RCC, Decree No. 139, dated 5 Sha'ban 1416 Hegira, corresponding to 27 December 1995.

Based on the provisions of Paragraph A of Article 42 of the Constitution, the RCC decided to promulgate the following Law No. 26 for 1995, the National Assembly Law:

**Part I: The Assembly's makeup**

**Chapter 1: The Membership**

Article 1: The National Assembly is made up of 250 members and enjoys corporate status.

Article 2: The members are chosen through direct and free elections and by secret public ballot.

Article 3: The National Assembly member represents the entire people in the Republic of Iraq.

Article 4: RCC members can — after the approval of the RCC chairman — run for the National Assembly membership. If elected, he has the right to be a member of the RCC and the National Assembly.

Article 5: National Assembly members must not be a chairman or member of the board of directors of a private sector company, with the exception of the representative of company workers. National Assembly members should not conclude a contract personally, or through a third party, with the state or with public corporate bodies in the capacity of an obligor or contractor.

Article 6:

1. The following persons can assume membership of the National Assembly and continue the posts they occupy, and the work they perform:

A. The minister or the employee in state departments and the socialist sector.

B. Chairmen and members of the executive bureaus and the central administrative bodies of trade unions and popular organizations.

2. The speaker of the National Assembly, his two deputies, the secretary of the Assembly, and the chairmen of the permanent committees shall be full-time members. The Assembly can ask any of its members to perform full-time work.

3. The members' service in the National Assembly is recognized for the purposes of allowances, promotion, and retirement.

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**Chapter 2: Immunities and Remunerations**

Article 7: The member of the Assembly shall not be questioned about the opinions he gives or the facts he discloses while carrying out his duty at the Assembly, unless he knows that these opinions and facts are incorrect or intended to inflict harm on others.

Article 8:

1. No Assembly member may be pursued or arrested for committing a crime during and after the sessions without permission from the chairman of the RCC, unless the member is involved in a capital crime. Giving permission for pursuance or arrest according to this item is tantamount to lifting immunity from the member.

2. The Presidential Office shall inform the speaker of the National Assembly, in the manner it deems appropriate, of the action taken against the National Assembly member in accordance with Clause 1 above or after the action is taken.

Article 9:

1. The speaker of the National Assembly shall receive the remuneration and allowances equivalent to the salary and allowances of the RCC member.

2. The deputy speaker of the National Assembly shall receive remuneration and allowances equivalent to the salary and allowances of a minister.

3. The member of the Assembly shall receive remuneration to be specified by the president of the republic.

4. The member of the Assembly shall receive lump sum allowances to be specified by the president of the republic, in addition to what he receives monthly in accordance with the provisions of this law. These allowances shall be excluded from the State Employees Allowances Law.

Article 10: The member of the Assembly may choose either the salary of his post, pension, reward, or the remuneration provided for in Clause 3 of Article 9 of this law, whichever is better.

Article 11: The state will assume the expenses of the stay of the Assembly member who has permanent residence outside Baghdad Governorate, in accordance with the president of the republic's decision, during the Assembly's session or during the member's fulfillment of his duties related to his work in the Assembly.

**Chapter 3: Termination of Membership**

Article 12: Membership in the Assembly will be terminated in any of the following cases:

1. If the Assembly's term ends or if the Assembly is dissolved.

2. If the member resigns. The resignation shall be effective once approved by a majority of the Assembly members and by the RCC chairman if the Assembly is not in session.

3. If one of the conditions for the nomination of the Assembly membership is no longer met. The Assembly shall approve this by a majority of its members.

4. If the member is engaged in a job or work outside Iraq for a period not less than six months. The membership shall be terminated upon a decision from the speakership.

5. If the member fails to attend one session without legitimate permission. Termination shall be through a decision by the majority of Assembly members.

6. If the member fails to attend two consecutive legislative sessions. Termination of membership shall be through a decision by the speakership.

7. If the member is dismissed from the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party, if he is a member of it.

**Part II: Electing the Assembly.**

**Chapter 1: Conditions That Must Be Met by Voters and Candidates:**

Article 13: Every Iraqi man or woman can be a voter or a candidate if he or she meets the conditions detailed in this law.

Article 14: The voter must be Iraqi, 18 years of age or above.

Article 15: The candidate for the National Assembly membership must meet the following conditions:

1. Must be born Iraqi from two Iraqi-born parents of non-foreign origin, or Iraqi-born from an Iraqi-born father of non-foreign origin and an Arab-born mother.

2. Must be fully eligible and 25 years of age or above.

3. Must believe in God and in the basic principles of the Constitution and the great 17-30 July revolution. His or her contributions to the glorious Saddam's al-Qadisiyah and immortal Mother of Battles, be that through participation, volunteering, donation, fields of work and production, or through intellectual and literary works, must be effective and distinguished, and in line with his or her capabilities and abilities. He or she must believe that the glorious Saddam's al-Qadisiyah and the immortal Mother of Battles have crowned Iraq with glory, and that the two battles were the sole way to

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protect Iraq's territory, waters, skies, security, and holy places.

4. Must believe in socialism and socialist behavior.

5. Must have a sound military service status.

6. Must not be a deserter from military service, unless, after rejoining the military service, he receives a medal, a valor pin, a high meritorious medal, or two Mother of Battles badges.

7. Must not be married to a foreign woman.

8. Must not be convicted of a dishonorable crime.

9. Must have at least obtained the intermediate education certificate or equivalent.

Article 16:

It is impermissible for those who practiced trade during the blockade imposed on Iraq since 6 August 1990 to run for a National Assembly seat. This ban will continue for two consecutive terms after the lifting of the blockade.

Article 17:

It is permissible for the personnel of the Armed Forces and Internal Security Forces who meet the candidacy conditions detailed in Article 15 of this law to run for the National Assembly membership after their resignation is approved according to law.

**Chapter 2: Candidacy**

Article 18: The candidacy application is submitted to the head of the administrative unit within 20 days as of the issuance date of a republican decree setting the date of the elections. The candidacy application must be supported by documents proving the availability of the conditions listed in provisions 1, 2, 5, 6, and 9 of Article 15 of this law. A written statement submitted by the candidate is sufficient to meet the other candidacy conditions.

Article 19:

1. The head of the administrative unit must inform the candidacy applicant of the approval of his or her application within 72 hours as of the date of its submission. If the candidacy application is rejected for failing to submit the documents proving the availability of the conditions detailed in provisions 1, 2, 5, 6, and 9 of Article 15 of this law, the head of the administrative unit must issue an explanatory note within 72 hours as of the date of the submission of the application and must notify the candidacy applicant of that within 24 hours as of the date of making the decision. In this case, the applicant can contest the decision within 72 hours of the date of his notification of it to the committee supervising the elections in the concerned constituency.

2. The supervising committee must decide on the contestation within seven days as of the date of its submission. The committee's decision shall be final and shall be passed to the head of the administrative unit and the applicant within 24 hours of the date of taking it.

3. A. In case of rejection, the supervising committee's decision shall be contestable by the candidacy applicant before the Higher Committee Supervising the Elections within 72 hours as of the date of receiving notification on the decision.

B. The contestation shall be submitted through the supervising committee, which should send it together with all documents concerning the candidacy to the Higher Committee within 24 hours as of submission to it.

4. The Higher Committee shall decide on the contestation within 72 hours as of receiving it. Its decision in this regard shall be final. It should notify the supervising committee and the candidacy applicant of its decision.

Article 20: The governor shall submit all candidacy applications to the Interior Ministry so that it would send them to the Higher Committee, supported by its notes and recommendations regarding the candidates.

Article 21:

1. The Higher Committee Supervising the Elections shall determine the names of the candidates for the National Assembly's membership in the constituencies in the event that their number should exceed the number of the National Assembly members assigned to each constituency.

The Committee has the right to remove the name of any of these candidates from the List of Candidates in the following two cases:

A. If a candidate does not meet the conditions for candidacy.

B. If a candidate does not submit the documents required in accordance with Article 18 of this law.

The candidate shall be notified of this action in writing within three days after a decision to remove his name is made.

2. Anyone whose name has been removed from the List of Candidates in accordance with the first item of this article can object to this removal before the RCC within 72 hours after he is notified of the removal of his name. The RCC's decision in this regard shall be final. The

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Higher Committee shall be notified of the RCC decision. The candidate shall be notified of this decision in writing or through the media.

3. Candidates shall be notified of approval of their candidacy by publication of their names in various media. Their names shall be displayed on a notice board prepared for this purpose in every polling center 20 days before the start of elections.

**Chapter 3: The Date of Election**

Article 22: The date of election shall be set by a presidential decree and announced to citizens through all media 60 days before the date set for voting.

Article 23: When the Assembly's term expires or when it is dissolved, a presidential decree shall be issued within 45 days after the expiration date or dissolution. The decree shall include setting a date to hold elections for a new Assembly in accordance with the provisions of Article 22 of this law.

Article 24: Voting shall take place within one day.

**Chapter 4: The Constituencies**

Article 25:

1. The Higher Committee Supervising the Elections shall define the number of people represented by each of the Assembly members, after taking into account Iraq's population and the number of the Assembly's members defined in Article 1 of this law.

2. Each governorate shall be divided into constituencies, and the number of people in each constituency should not be less than five times the number of those represented by each member of the Assembly.

3. If the population in a governorate is less than five times the number of those represented by each member of the Assembly, the governorate shall be considered one constituency whose representatives in the Assembly shall be defined on the basis of one representative for the number of people defined in accordance with the first item of this article.

4. If the population of a governorate is more than five times the number of those represented by each member of the Assembly, this governorate shall be divided into two or more constituencies, provided that this increase should not be less than half of the number defined in the first item of this article and in a way that does not conflict with it.

5. The number of people which is not less than half of the number defined in the first item of this article is considered the same as the number defined in that item for the purposes of this article.

Article 26: Every constituency shall have one elections list including the names of several candidates whose number is more than that allocated for that constituency.

Article 27: Every constituency shall be divided into several polling centers to facilitate the elections process. The interior minister shall issue a statement on their formation.

**Chapter 5: The Election Commissions**

Article 28:

1. A commission to supervise elections called the Higher Commission Supervising Elections in Iraq shall be formed in accordance with an RCC decree.

2. The Higher Commission shall determine the constituencies in the governorates whose population is five times more than the number set in the first provision of Article 25 of this law, provided it is not less than half the number set in this provision.

3. The Higher Commission shall form supervising commissions in the constituencies for supervising the election process in these constituencies.

4. The Higher Commission shall issue instructions setting the date and method for the election of the heads and members of the commissions for supervising elections and the election committees.

Article 29: The commission for supervising elections in the constituency shall be chaired by a judge whose rank should not be less than the second grade chosen by the justice minister and the membership of two representatives of the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party, a representative of every party which has a candidate in the elections in that constituency, and a representative of the Interior Ministry.

Article 30: The commission supervising elections in the constituency shall form seven-member election committees to supervise the elections in the constituencies. These committees shall be chaired by a judge, a deputy public prosecutor, or, when necessary, by jurists from the Justice Ministry or the other ministries to be chosen by the justice minister, and the membership of a representative of the Interior Ministry, and five voters who are qualified to run for the National Assembly elections to be chosen by the candidates registered on the election list in the constituency.

**Chapter 6: Voters Lists**

Article 31: Lists of all citizens above 18 years of age, excluding members of the Armed Forces and the Public Security Forces, shall be prepared in every constituency. These lists, distributed to the polling

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centers and arranged in alphabetical order, shall include their addresses, and date and place of their birth. Several copies of these lists shall be sent to the commission supervising elections in the constituency. The Higher Commission shall decide which party prepares these lists.

Article 32: The commission supervising elections in the constituency shall be responsible for distributing the lists to polling centers to make them public at least 21 days prior to the date set for the elections after stamping them with the stamp of the commission supervising the elections in the constituency and determining the date of their publication.

Article 33:

1. Every citizen who is qualified to vote and whose name has been omitted from the voters lists has the right to have his name registered. Any voter whose name has been registered in the voters list has the right to register the name of any citizen whose name was illegally omitted or to remove the name of any citizen who was illegally registered in the voters lists during a period of 25 days from the date of the publication of the voters lists.

2. The request shall be submitted to the commission supervising elections in the constituency for a decision to be made not more than 72 hours after its submission, and its decision shall be final.

Article 34: The identity card will be adopted to identify voters whose names are registered on the list of every polling center. The Higher Commission can issue instructions adopting any other official document to identify the voters who did not obtain an identity card.

**Chapter 7: Voting**

Article 35: Before carrying out their tasks, the head and members of the elections committee at the polling center should take the following oath before the committee supervising the elections in the constituency:

I swear by Almighty God, by my honor, and my faith to perform my job with sincerity, loyalty, honesty, without any bias, and with respect for the law.

Article 36:

1. The election of the candidates can be made by writing on the ballot card. The form, specifications, and instructions on how to fill out the ballot card shall be specified in a statement issued by the Higher Commission.

2. The voter who cannot read or write can ask someone else to fill out his ballot card.

Article 37: The Higher Commission shall issue instructions defining the shape, size, and specifications of ballot boxes as well as the way to open and close these boxes.

Article 38: The commission supervising the elections in a constituency will print the ballot cards and prepare ballot boxes according to instructions issued by the Higher Commission.

Article 39: The head of the elections committee is entrusted with maintaining order at the balloting center. He has the authority to take measures to secure holding the elections in an orderly and safe fashion. Internal security forces are not allowed to enter the polling centers except upon the request of the head of the elections committee.

Article 40: The elections committee will settle any complaint concerning the elections by issuing a documented decision.

Article 41: The voting process will begin at 0800 and end at 2000. At the end of the voting process, the Higher Commission, when necessary, shall issue a statement setting other times that do not exceed the time specified for voting.

Article 42:

1. When the deadline for voting ends, the head of the elections committee shall announce the end of the elections. This will be documented in the minutes of the elections.

2. The head of the elections committee will open the ballot box in the polling center and the elections committee will count the votes before the voters.

3. If the ballot card contains more names than that allowed for a constituency, the names that shall be taken into account will be according to the chronological listing on that card.

4. The results of vote counting shall be recorded in the minutes of the elections as follows:

a. The number of voters.
b. The number of valid ballot cards.
c. The number of invalid ballot cards.
d. The number of votes each candidate has received starting from the highest to the lowest number of votes.

5. The head of the elections committee shall publicly read out what came in the minutes of the elections. Then, he and members of the committee shall sign the minutes.

6. The head of the elections committee shall place the minutes of the elections, the ballot cards, and other

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documents in a sealed envelope, and shall hand it over to the commission supervising the elections in the constituency.

Article 43:

The following ballot cards will be considered invalid:

1. Cards that do not have the election committee's stamp on them.

2. Cards that do not have the name of any candidate on them.

Article 44:

1. The commission supervising the elections in the election district shall declare the results of the elections in that election district. It shall prepare and sign a report to this effect and lodge it with the Higher Commission, along with all the election cards and other documents related to the elections.

2. The candidates who receive the most votes shall win the membership of the Assembly according to the number of members in each election district. If several candidates receive an equal number of votes to the votes received by the candidate who came last, then balloting shall be repeated a week after the results are announced to elect one candidate.

**Chapter 8: Election Campaigns**

Article 45: Election campaigns shall be free within the bounds of the law.

Article 46: The Higher Commission shall issue instructions specifying how candidates may launch election campaigns.

Article 47:

1. The state shall pay the expenses of election campaigns and activities for all candidates equally.

2. If a candidate does not receive 1,000 votes in his election district, then he shall remunerate the state for all the expenses paid to him in accordance with Clause 1 of this article.

Article 48:

1. Any candidate to the membership of the National Assembly who receives money from any local party with the aim of influencing the results of the elections shall be deleted from the list of candidates and shall be imprisoned.

2. Any candidate to the membership of the National Assembly who receives money from any foreign party with the aim of influencing the results of the elections shall be deleted from the list of candidates and shall be punished according to Article 156 of the Penal Code.

Article 49:

1. Election campaigns shall commence a day after the names of candidates are announced and shall end 24 hours before voting begins.

2. The Higher Commission shall cancel the nomination of any candidate who violates legal rules or the regulations of election campaigns. This cancellation does not exempt the violator of any other responsibility under other laws.

**Chapter 9: By-elections.**

Article 50: By-elections shall be held to fill vacant seats in the assembly once a year in the same election districts in which there is a vacant seat and according to the same election method stipulated in this law. The remaining term of the Assembly must not be less than six months. A date shall be set for the by-elections by the Higher Commission supervising the elections.

Article 51: If the number of vacant seats is more than 5 percent of the number of the Assembly members or if the number of vacant seats in any election district is more than half of its seats, then by-elections shall be held within 90 days according to the same method stipulated in this law, provided that the remaining term of the Assembly is not less than six months.

**Part III. The Assembly's Powers**

**Chapter 1: Legislative Powers**

Article 52: The National Assembly shall have power to:

1. Propose draft laws in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution.

2. Pass laws in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution.

Article 53: The president of the republic may ask the National Assembly to debate the principles of any draft law and to accept or reject this draft law by voting without debating its articles.

Article 54: The National Assembly shall debate and approve the state's general draft budget and development plan, excluding what relates to the Ministry of Defense and public security affairs and any other issue which the president of the republic thinks should be excluded from debate.

Article 55: The National Assembly shall review international treaties and agreements to endorse or reject them. The National Assembly shall not vote on the articles or chapters of these treaties or amend them.

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**Chapter 2: Control Powers**

Article 56: The National Assembly shall debate the state's general domestic and foreign policy.

Article 57:

1. The National Assembly may summon any cabinet member to seek clarifications or answers or for interrogation in accordance with the assembly's by-laws.

2. Any member of the National Assembly may direct an oral or written question, through the speaker of the Assembly, to any cabinet member to seek clarifications on a decision made by the minister or an action related to the policy or affairs of his ministry. The question, however, must not be related to an issue referred to the judiciary.

Article 58: When necessary, the National Assembly may submit its view to the president of the republic in light of the results it reaches through a question directed to, or interrogation of any cabinet member in accordance with the provisions of Article 57 of this law.

Article 59:

1. The president of the republic may ask the National Assembly and its specialized committees to do the following:

A. Inspect the departments of the state and the socialist and private sectors when necessary, in a complete or partial manner, and through the method the assembly deems fit.

B. Summon the prime minister, any minister, or any civil servant to interrogate him about an issue for which he was referred to the assembly and to seek the truth.

2. In light of the results it reaches, the Assembly may recommend appropriate measures against persons who are proven to be guilty, including relieving or dismissing them, pensioning them off, or referring them to competent courts to be tried in accordance with the law.

Article 60: The speaker of the National Assembly may propose taking a minister or someone in his rank to task in front of the president of the republic for delivering inaccurate information to the National Assembly even though he knows about this, or for deliberately withholding information which he is asked to deliver, unless he is not allowed to reveal such information as dictated by his job.

**Chapter 3: Consultative Powers**

Article 61: The president of the republic may refer any issue to the National Assembly to seek advice. This issue must be reviewed by the Assembly's specialized committees or the speaker's office or debated by the Assembly.

Article 62: The National Assembly, upon its own initiative, may offer advice to the presidency of the republic on any issue which is reviewed by the Assembly's permanent committees or the speaker's office or the assembly.

**Chapter 4: Organizational Powers**

Article 63: The National Assembly shall endorse its own budget and appoint its own staff and personnel.

Article 64: The National Assembly shall issue its own by-laws to determine its method of operations and how it will exercise its duties and maintain discipline among its members without violating the provisions of the Constitution and the laws in force.

**Part IV: The Assembly's Method of Operations**

**Chapter 1: Holding Sessions**

Article 65:

1. The National Assembly shall convene in Baghdad. Quorum, which is constituted by the attendance of a majority of its members, is required for its sessions.

2. The National Assembly may convene somewhere else in the Republic of Iraq when necessary upon a decision by the president of the republic.

Article 66: The National Assembly shall be called into session by a republican decree within no more than 15 days of the announcement of the election results.

Article 67: The first session of the National Assembly shall be chaired by the eldest member. The members of the National Assembly shall take the following oath:

I swear by Almighty God and by my honor and belief that I shall adhere to the Constitution; look after the people's interests; preserve the homeland's safety, sovereignty, and unity; abide by the laws; honestly safeguard the honor and trust of responsibility and the achievements and gains of the great 17-30 July revolution and work to safeguard its march toward its central objectives of unity, freedom, and socialism; and work to deepen the meanings of these objectives among citizens through my contacts with them and work in the assembly.

Article 68:

1. The term of the National Assembly shall be four legislative years, starting from the date of its first session and ending at its last session in the fourth legislative

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year. The Assembly's speaker's office shall continue to perform its duties until a new assembly is elected.

2. The president of the republic may issue a republican decree extending the term of the Assembly if national interest dictates this.

Article 69:

1. The legislative year is made up of two sessions. The Assembly's activities may begin with either of these two sessions. The first of these two session shall open on 7 April and end by the end of June. The other shall commence on 15 October and end by the end of December. The second session shall not be prorogued until after the general budget has been endorsed.

2. The president of the republic may extend the assembly's session. The National Assembly may also extend its session upon a decision made by a majority of its members provided the extension does not exceed one month so as to finish the assignments which required extending the session.

3. The president of the republic may call the National Assembly into an extraordinary session whenever it is necessary to do so. This session shall be confined to the issues which necessitated calling the National Assembly into session.

Article 70: Any cabinet minister, who is not a National Assembly member, can attend the National Assembly sessions after approval from the president of the republic and can participate in its deliberations without the right to vote.

Article 71: The National Assembly sessions will be public and can be held in camera at the request of the president of the republic, the National Assembly speaker, or of 20 of its members with the approval of the National Assembly.

Article 72: To ensure the smooth operation of the institutions of the republic, the president of the republic shall have the right to dissolve the National Assembly.

Article 73: The proceedings of the National Assembly's public sessions shall be published in official minutes as a supplement of the Official Gazette.

**Chapter 2: The Speaker's Office**

Article 74: The National Assembly shall elect a speaker, two deputy speakers, and a secretary in a secret ballot at the first session it shall hold. They will constitute the Speaker's Office.

Article 75: The Speaker's Office of the National Assembly is responsible for the preparation of the assembly's working plan for every session and its agenda and for managing its financial and administrative affairs in accordance with its bylaws.

Article 76: In case the post of speaker, of one of his deputies, or of the secretary of the assembly becomes vacant for any reason, the National Assembly shall elect from among its members a successor through a secret ballot in the first session after the position becomes vacant.

Chapter 3: Determining the validity of the elections

Article 77: The National Assembly rules on the contestations submitted as to the validity of the election of its members in a public session following the election of the Speaker's Office and before discussion of any item on its agenda.

Article 78: Any National Assembly member can submit to the Assembly any written documents or verbal statements contesting the validity of the membership of any of its members during a period of 15 days after election results are announced.

Article 79:

1. Any Iraqi citizen within a period of 15 days after election results are announced can contest the validity of the membership of any National Assembly member in a request to be submitted to the public prosecutor's office.

2. The public prosecutor's office submits a recommendation to the National Assembly within a period of 15 days from the date it received the request in accordance with the provisions of Paragraph 2 of Article 28 of the Public Prosecution Law No. 159 for 1979.

Article 80: The National Assembly rules with a majority vote of its members on the contestations submitted as to the validity of the election of any of its members. The membership shall be canceled only if the National Assembly makes a decision with a two-thirds majority.

Article 81: If the National Assembly finds out that the contestation enunciated in article 79 of this law is not based on cogent proof, contains lies, or is intended to harm the member whose membership is contested, the National Assembly speaker can refer the contestant to the competent investigation court for legal proceedings to be taken against him.

**Chapter 4: The National Assembly committees**

Article 82: In its first session, the National Assembly shall form standing and temporary committees from among its members which will exercise the duties earmarked for them in the assembly's bylaws. The term

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of office in the standing committees will be 2 years, renewable.

Article 83: The National Assembly's standing committees have the right to ask state, social sector, and mixed sector institutions, and the popular organizations and trade unions to provide them with the information they need to study the topics referred to them.

Article 84:

1. The National Assembly, after proposal by the Speaker's Office, can form temporary and investigation committees as required by the topics submitted to the assembly. These committees shall be formed by the Speaker's Office outside the National Assembly sessions, with task to study complaints and issues referred to them.

2. The temporary committee [as heard] and the investigation committee [as heard] will be automatically dissolved upon the completion of the task they had to perform or the expiry of their mandate.

Article 85:

1. The National Assembly's investigation committee has the authority to investigate all facts available to it. For this purpose, it can seek the assistance of experts and can ask anyone to testify according to the law. It can also look at everything that has to do with the case at hand after getting the approval of competent quarters.

2. The investigation committee will refer its report and recommendations to the National Assembly's speaker to be discussed by members of the National Assembly after the report is distributed to them.

Article 86:

1. a. At the request of the president of the republic or of anyone authorized by him, the National Assembly's committees can invite any of those who are working at the Presidency's offices and departments to seek any explanations, present inquiries, or ask them for information.

b. Heads of civil departments and state employees can be summoned by the National Assembly's committees to present inquiries and to seek information only after getting the approval of their superiors.

2. With the approval of the presidency, the National Assembly's committees can invite military men and Public Security employees to seek any explanations, present inquiries, or ask for information from them so long as this does not violate the need to maintain the safety of their work and tasks.

3. The National Assembly's bylaws will specify who from the presidency will invite the state employees mentioned in provisions 1 and 2 of this article.

**Part V: General and Final Provisions**

Article 87: For every election term, the RCC has the right to specify the elections system it finds suitable in order to achieve the essence of the democratic principle.

Article 88:

1. The RCC can decide to postpone elections in one constituency or more if circumstances there prevent holding the elections until the situation returns to normal.

2. The president of the republic can maintain the membership of all or some of the members of the former National Assembly in the new National Assembly to represent the constituencies in which it has been decided to postpone elections in accordance with the first provision of this article. He can appoint people from that constituency, who are qualified as candidates, as new members in the National Assembly within the number set for every constituency.

Article 89:

1. The following RCC decrees will be canceled:
a. Decree No. 673 for 1980.
b. Decree No. 941 for 1980.
c. Decree No. 1683 for 1980.
d. Decree No. 60 for 1982.
e. Decree No. 1161 for 1984.
f. Decree No. 860 for 1987.
g. Decree No. 115 for 1988.

2. Paragraph 2 of RCC Decree No. 517 for 1987 will be canceled.

Article 90:

1. National Assembly Law No. 55 for 1980 will be canceled and the Speaker's Office formed under that law will remain in office until a new National Assembly is elected.

2. The bylaws issued according to the canceled National Assembly Law No. 55 for 1980 will remain in force in a way that does not contradict the provisions of this law until new bylaws that are in harmony with this law are issued.

Article 91: This law shall take effect as of the date it is published in the Official Gazette.

[Signed] Saddam Husayn, RCC chairman

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Reasons for issuing this law: The great 17-30 July revolution has paid special attention to people's self-government as a general principle throughout the ages. This principle is linked to the views and standards of every nation and people and the practical measures adopted to achieve it under prevailing circumstances. Based on this understanding, the link between any measure and any stage is the principle that guides fine thinking in all fields. In this context, this measure is unavoidable. Democracy is a principle that requires implementation. Progress plays a great role in bolstering this principle. One of the most important requirements for the implementation of democracy is building its own institutions, which express the will of the people through the laws they enact to organize the affairs of the state. When the representatives of the people enact a law, they watch its implementation. However, it is impossible to implement democracy in its professional sense among tens or hundreds of millions of people without a sound representation. Therefore, the people's self- government has been reduced to real representatives. This is the universal concept of the implementation of democracy. Therefore, the party that passes legislation and exercises control must make sure that other state institutions abide by democracy when they perform their duties. This is a necessary prelude to the exercise of democracy in accordance with its practical and effective framework. Legislation and control over state agencies are two major aspects of the democratic formula.

Since 1980, the leadership of the 17-30 July revolution has paid special attention to the exercise of democracy in terms of legislation and control. The leadership completed the establishment of a basic constitutional institution, which is the National Assembly, so this Assembly will, alongside the RCC, perform the legislative duties stipulated in its own law. Out of its eagerness to bolster democratic practice, the July march leadership reinforced the National Assembly's law by a series of legislation that expanded its legislative and control duties over the state agencies. This series of legislation empowered the National Assembly to offer advice to the president of the republic. The leadership paid attention to this achievement and the accompanying development process and its impact on the political system in Iraq. This had not been witnessed in Iraq before the 14 July 1958 revolution. After that and until the great 17-30 July revolution was launched, there was no elected legislative or collective institution. Regimes in those days ruled the country undemocratically.

Between 1968 and 1980, the RCC collectively performed the duty of passing legislation and exercising control over state agencies. For 15 years now, the National Assembly has expressed the principle of equality among citizens without any discrimination on religious or ethnic grounds and without giving any special political or social privileges based on private ownership as a means to gain Assembly membership. Iraq has recently made large strides toward democracy. These steps were crowned on the Great March Day, 15 October 1995, when the unyielding Iraqi people affirmed their commitment to their principles and their absolute loyalty to their leader President Saddam Husayn. They did this through a public referendum that strengthened the momentum of democratic legitimacy and publicly and widely gave revolutionary legitimacy its human and principled meaning. In light of this, it is time to review the operations of this constitutional institution, particularly its legislation and control powers. This institution is inspired by the confidence and spirit of the people while passing laws and protecting the rights and freedoms of citizens. It is necessary, therefore, to review the National Assembly's Law No. 55 of 1980 and to draft a new law that includes all the powers and duties of the National Assembly, as well as those added to them by later legislation. The purpose of this is to enable the National Assembly to reflect the circumstances, duties, and challenges of the current stage and the social and cultural developments witnessed in Iraq over the past period. This is why the National Assembly law has been reconsidered in terms of the assembly's composition, powers, and method of operations in a way that enables this constitutional establishment to play an active role in the name of the people and an interactive role with the people and to enable it to occupy a special place among the establishments of the Republic of Iraq.

For all the above reasons, this law has been issued.

[Baghdad Television in Arabic at 1830 GMT on 27 December carries a report on the text of the National Assembly Law, which is found to be identical to the AL-THAWRAH version]

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**Peres Interviewed on Peace Negotiations, 'Ayyash**

*JN1801120396 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 18 Jan 96 p 12, 7*

[Interview with Prime Minister Shim'on Peres by P.V. Vivekanand in Jerusalem on 15 January — first eight paragraphs are JORDAN TIMES introduction]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] An Israeli-Syrian peace agreement is possible in 1996 although not assured, but there is a new and clear seriousness in the Syrian approach to peace negotiations, Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres has said.

Mr. Peres also conceded that there could not be any movement in the Lebanese-Israeli track before substantial progress is made on the Syrian front.

The new Syrian seriousness, Mr. Peres said, was evident in the fresh round of negotiations that started in Wye Plantation, Maryland, in December, with the Syrians not attaching any conditions to the talks.

The prime minister, in an interview with the JORDAN TIMES at his office in West Jerusalem on Monday [15 January], evaded direct comment on his options on parliamentary elections but said his government needed a mandate from the people regardless of the direction of the negotiations with Syria.

Mr. Peres brushed aside Palestinian charges that Israel was behind the killing of Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] activist Yahya 'Ayyash, but declined to deny or acknowledge whether the charge was true.

The prime minister also reserved comment on Israel's options if Iran develops nuclear weapons, as reported in the press, but said the Arab countries in the Gulf should be more worried about the Islamic republic's plans.

Countries like Iran, Iraq, and Libya are not a problem limited to Israel but for the entire region, he said.

Following is a transcript of the interview in a question and answer format:

Question: U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher has obviously broken new ground in the Syrian-Israeli track in his latest shuttle. How realistic is the stated objective of arriving at a peace accord in 1996?

Answer: I think it is possible but not assured. The reason is the seriousness of the questions that we have to solve. There are many important issues that have to be considered, very carefully. We are trying very much to do so. But we are working without any stopper in our hands. We are ready to move ahead. We have noticed a change of mood and mind on the Syrian side and hope it will continue.

Q: Does it mean that you have found a new seriousness in the Syrian approach after the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin?

A: I will not connect it with the assassination of the prime minister, but there is clearly a new seriousness in the Syrian approach.

For example in the Maryland meeting, there wasn't an exchange of conditions. It was not a shooting game. It was really an introduction of many ideas that both sides sought to check carefully. The art of negotiating is not to take in all the conditions and try to force the other party to accept them, but to be innovative, to be creative in terms of revolutionary ideas. We could sense the beginning of it at the talks in Wye Plantation and it was continued. Now the visit of the secretary. There is an entirely new approach, more open, more candid and this holds out good promises for the negotiations.

Q: Does it also mean that the Syrian state of mind is more conductive to accepting an upgrading of the negotiations, perhaps high-level meetings?

A: I think it is today more open. It is not yet concluded, but it is more open.

Q: There are conflicting reports on your options on Israeli elections. Do you think an achievement on the Syrian front will have an impact on your options?

A: One must understand something. Our system guarantees elections. We shall ask the Israeli public to vote. If we should not conclude our negotiations, we shall ask the Israeli public for a mandate to continue. We need a mandate anyway. If the negotiations go very far, we shall ask for a mandate for approval. If we shall not go long enough, we shall ask for a mandate to continue. It does not matter much.

By law we are going to have elections on Oct. 29. The difference is only a few months. It doesn't matter very much. It is not a revolutionary change. It is not a difference of years, not even one year.

Q: Lebanese President Elias al-Hirawi has repeatedly said he was ready to send the Lebanese army to take charge of security in South Lebanon if Israel withdrew from the area. There has been no Israeli response to the call. Why?

A: There was no need because we know for sure we cannot start with the Lebanese separate negotiations. The negotiations with Lebanon can be started only after we deepen our negotiations with Syria. This is the view of the Syrians, the Israelis and the Lebanese. The rest is speculation without touching the ground.

Q: Even if it comes from the president of Lebanon?

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A: He did not suggest anything. He says we shall negotiate together or parallel to the negotiations with Syria. He did not say whether he will negotiate separately or ahead of the Syrians.

Q: How do you see countries like Iran, Iraq and Libya fitting into the new regional order?

A: Iran, Iraq and Libya are not part of the region, but a problem of the region. They are a problem for everybody not only for us.

I don't know of a modern country that would like to be submitted to the whims of fundamentalists. The problem of Iraq is Saddam Husayn. The problem of Iran is the very extreme views of the Khomeyni-led movement. Libya has a very unique leader. So, you see, it is problematic.

Q: What are Israel's options in the event of Iran developing nuclear weapons?

A: I don't think we are in any mood to threaten anybody or frighten anybody with these sort of declarations. But if Iran produces nuclear weapons and if I were a member of any other Arab state, a member of Iraq, a member of Saudi Arabia, I would be very worried.

Q: Israel has been accused of being behind the killing of Yahya 'Ayyash. Would you have any comment on that?

A: I never knew that 'Ayyash was such a great saint. He was responsible for the killing of 60 Israelis, innocent Israelis, and the injuring of more than 300 others. Why are people surprised that the Israelis did not go to mourn his death? Why should anyone in Israel do that? He was not a saint and was not a hero in our eyes because he killed women and children. He was not fighting on the front. I was a little surprised by all those demonstrations. I don't see any room to participate in the whole episode.

Q: Hardliners argue that the killing showed Israel was not committed to honouring peace with the Palestinians.

A: Why, was 'Ayyash a great leader of peace?

Q: It is based on an argument that Israel went out of its way to eliminate someone...

A: First of all, Israel did not say anything like this. It did not say anything like that. At the same time, neither will Israel describe 'Ayyash as a great leader of peace in the Middle East. Who said the hardliners are right? The hardliners are wrong.

**Savir: Syria Wants Peace Treaty This Year**

*TA1701160496 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1500 GMT 17 Jan 96*

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Syria is interested in signing a peace treaty with Israel this year, Foreign Ministry Director General Uri Savir said today. And a senior U.S. official said today that Syria is ready in principle for a summit meeting between Peres and al-Asad. Our political correspondent Udi Segal is in the studio with the details:

[Segal] In the struggle of views regarding the negotiations with Syria, the optimists' voices sounded clearer today. Israeli peace talks coordinator Uri Savir announced today: Syria is interested in signing a peace treaty with Israel this year, despite the fact that we are not absolutely clear on the Syrian stands.

The main obstacle on the road to the agreement is still psychological, Savir said. He added that during the Wye talks, he told the Syrian negotiators that unless a peace psychology is adopted, even before actual peace has been attained, it will be very difficult to reach an agreement. [passage omitted]

**Peres Denies U.S.-Prepared Agreement With Syria**

*TA1701201596 Jerusalem GOVERNMENT PRESS OFFICE in English 17 Jan 96*

[Statement by 'Aliza Goren, prime minister's media advisor]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Prime Minister's Bureau denies the reports in the media which quoted the AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT newspaper to the effect that the United States has prepared a draft declaration of principles between Israel and Syria.

Prime Minister Shim'on Peres referred to the subject in response to a journalist's question after his meeting with U.S. Vice President Al Gore, and said that it would be more logical to first reach an agreement and afterwards put it in writing, than it would be to put it in writing and afterwards find out that there is no agreement.

**Peres: No Lebanese Talks If 'Terrorism' Continues**

*TA1701122596 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1200 GMT 17 Jan 96*

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Shim'on Peres said there cannot be any real negotiations with the Lebanese Government if the freedom of action given to Hizballah and the abuse leveled at the SLA [South Lebanese Army] and its commanders do not end. Peres said the Beirut government's positions worry Israel because it authorizes the activities of an organization

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that receives orders from Iran and serves a terrorist state. We want peace with Lebanon, but peace and terrorism cannot be mixed, Peres said. He spoke after meeting SLA commander General Antoine Lahd.

**Peres Urges Beirut To Stop Mistreating SLA**

*TA1701201696 Jerusalem GOVERNMENT PRESS OFFICE in English 17 Jan 96*

[Statement by Avi Bnayahu, Defense Ministry media coordinator]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] "We believe that the Lebanese government must stop mistreating the South Lebanon Army [SLA] and its commander. There will be no peace with Lebanon without an honorable arrangement and full agreement for integrating the SLA in the Lebanese security forces," Prime Minister and Defense Minister Shim'on Peres said this morning, following a conversation with SLA commander General Antoine Lahd.

Deputy Chief of Staff Maj.-Gen. Matan Vilna'i, Coordinator of Government Activities in Lebanon Uri Lubrani, OC Northern Command Maj.-Gen. 'Amiram Levin, OC Intelligence Maj.-Gen. Moshe Ya'alon, and the head of the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] Liaison Unit for Lebanon, also participated in the meeting.

Prime Minister Peres expressed his deep appreciation to General Lahd and his army, and said that the SLA ensures that there is peace in southern Lebanon until there is a peace agreement.

The Prime Minister and Defense Minister said that the order to appear before it, which a Lebanese court issued against General Lahd is, "an insult to the SLA commander and great Lebanese patriot, and we will not ignore it." He added that despite the fact that Israel has no territorial claim on Lebanon, it is the Lebanese government which needs to explain itself, and if it desires peace, it must take into account that it is not alone in the area.

Peres said that the position of the Lebanese government worries Israel, since it allows Hizballah to operate in southern Lebanon when it is clear that this organization is trained, financed, and receives orders from Iran. "Hizballah serves a foreign country, a terrorist state, and instead of the Lebanese government trying to exercise control over it, it gives it freedom of action in large parts of Lebanon. The Lebanese government does not understand the great value constituted by the existence of the SLA. There can be no genuine peace negotiations with the Lebanese government, if it does not halt the freedom of action given to Hizballah, and does not stop the attacks on the SLA and its commander," the Prime Minister said. He added that, "We want peace with Lebanon, but it is not possible to combine peace with terrorism. The time has come for the Lebanese government to draw conclusions from the mistakes it has made, and not blame them on Israel. In the past, Lebanon opened the area to Fatah, and now it is opening it to Hizballah terrorism. Israel is not fighting Lebanon, but will not hesitate to act against terrorism in Lebanon."

In summation, after his meeting with General Lahd, Prime Minister and Defense Minister Peres called on the Lebanese government to show responsibility for its future and for the chances for peace, and to respect the great contribution of the SLA until we reach a permanent peace.

**IDF Sees Iraqi, Syrian Missile Arsenals Growing**

*TA1701135996 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 17 Jan 96 p 21*

[Report by Alex Fishman]

[FBIS Translated Text] Within the next four years, Iraq will have 10 Scud launchers and some 150 Scud missiles. This is the current IDF [Israel Defense Forces] estimate of the surface-to-surface missile threat Iraq is expected to pose by the end of the decade.

The Home Front Command has prepared staff work regarding the threats to which the Israeli civilian population may be exposed by the year 2000. The paper says that even today, Iraq can place a significant amount of launchers and short-range FROG missiles at the disposal of any expeditionary force it might send to join a war against Israel.

The paper adds that by the year 2000, Syria will have more than 80 launchers of surface-to-surface missiles of various kinds, and over 1,000 missiles of the following types: Scud B, Scud C, SS-21, FROG-7, and precise Russian missiles dubbed Tochka.

It is believed in the IDF that Libya, Iran, Syria, and Iraq are each separately developing nonconventional chemical and biological warheads and air bombs. The document lists possible scenarios of a future war, according to which dozens of missiles might land in Israeli territory. Some of the missiles will carry nonconventional warheads that can cause much more damage to humans than conventional ones.

**Weizman Returns From Official Visit to Germany**

*TA1801060596 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 18 Jan 96*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] President 'Ezer Weizman has returned home after his official four-day visit in Ger-

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many. Weizman cut his trip short in the wake of Tuesday's terror attack in which two Israeli soldiers were killed. The president ended his visit yesterday with a trip to the formerly communist east of the country. Weizman told reporters in Dresden that the problems of reuniting Germany and Israel's integrating hundreds of thousands of immigrants from East Europe were similar.

**Meretz Leader Aloni Withdraws From Party Race**

*TA1701204396 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 17 Jan 96*

[Report by party affairs correspondents Qeren Neubach and Yaron Deqel and announcer Hayim Yavin]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Yavin] Minister Shulamit Aloni will not compete for the Meretz leadership or run in the Knesset elections on the Meretz ticket. Aloni stressed that her step does not mean that she plans to depart from the political arena. Here is our party affairs correspondent Qeren Neubach's report:

[Neubach] [passage omitted] Meretz leaders voiced their regret about Aloni's move, but beyond that, no one tried to stop her. Many movement members said lately that Minister Aloni's departure is inevitable and necessary. [passage omitted]

Now Meretz officials are apprehensively awaiting Aloni's postresignation remarks, including personal attacks against Minister Sarid that may hurt the party on the eve of the 1996 elections.

[Yavin] Is Aloni's resignation final, Yaron Deqel?

[Deqel] Shulamit Aloni is quitting, and evidently so is Minister Tzaban, who has his own reasons, although Meretz members are apparently pressuring him to reconsider. Shulamit Aloni is leaving, and there is a major commotion in Meretz as a result. Meretz Executive Chairman Hanan Erez has even called on Aloni to defer her announcement due to be made tonight.

[Yavin] Why is she leaving?

[Deqel] Shulamit Aloni has reached the conclusion that she has exhausted her options in this party, that she can no longer work with people who betrayed her for several years. The major question now is whether she will establish her own party, which is what Meretz fears greatly. Meretz leaders fear that Shulamit Aloni will run independently in the elections and secure two, three, possibly four Knesset seats. If that happens, it will be a harsh blow to Meretz. [passage omitted]

[A related report on Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 1900 GMT on 17 January adds that, speaking on the "Focus" program on Television Channel 1 tonight, Aloni said "she realizes she does not have the support of the National Kibbutz Movement constituency of Meretz. As a result of internal organization problems, Meretz has become an unwieldy movement. She added that she felt profound personal distress because associates constantly pressure her to avoid speaking up on issues that are close to her heart. She criticized Minister Yosi Sarid on several issues.

["Minister Aloni pointed out that she intends to carry on all her present duties, including her responsibilities in the Meretz Knesset faction."]

**Ramon Explores Time Needed for Early Elections**

*TA1801061896 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 18 Jan 96*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Labor Party is preparing for the possibility of Knesset elections being held in May, if a decision is taken to move them forward. Prime Minister Peres has called on Interior Minister Ramon to reduce to a minimum the amount of time it takes to prepare for new elections. A Qol Yisra'el reporter says that the Labor Party is expected to decide in mid-February, following the next round of talks with Syria and the visit of U.S. Secretary of State Christopher to the region. Elections would then be held no later than three months following the decision. If the decision is made, primaries for the Labor Party would also be moved forward to March.

The national supervisor for elections says that the Interior Ministry could prepare the voter registry within 50 days in the event of early elections. He made this assessment following a request by Interior Minister Ramon to assess the time it would take to prepare for new elections.

**Peres Bureau Denies U.S. Pressure on Elections**

*TA1801084296 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 18 Jan 96 p A1*

[Report by Aluf Ben]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Senior U.S. Administration sources have expressed opposition to moving up the date of the Israeli elections out of the fear that this might harm the negotiations between Israel and Syria. This emerges from messages that arrived in Jerusalem recently through various channels.

A senior member of U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's entourage, who briefed correspondents at the close of the secretary's Middle East tour, expressed fear over the possibility of early elections in Israel, saying that this would conflict with the momentum attained in the negotiations with Syria. According to a report received in Jerusalem yesterday, the official

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said that advancing the elections in Israel would entail a freeze and a postponement of the talks with Syria, which is why it is "neither desirable nor necessary."

Another report notes that Christopher is enjoying good publicity these days, but it is clear that he will resign his post after the U.S. presidential elections. He is now trying to score a political achievement in the Middle East before he retires.

A senior U.S. diplomat recently met with political figures who were visiting Israel from the United States and briefed them on the peace process. He asked that they relay a message to Prime Minister Shim'on Peres opposing the advancement of the elections to June, which might harm the chances of attaining an agreement with Syria.

A source in the prime minister's bureau said yesterday that the United States has not been applying any pressure against advancing the elections and that the U.S. officials who met with Peres recently did not raise the issue. [passage omitted]

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 0600 GMT on 18 January reports that "Labor Secretary Nisim Zvili said in an interview this morning that he knows of no U.S. pressure not to bring the elections forward so as not to harm the talks with the Syrians."]

**Knesset Rejects Expanding Jerusalem Jurisdiction**

*TA1801094796 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 18 Jan 96 p 2*

[Report by Liat Collins]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A bill to widen the jurisdiction of Jerusalem to include Ma'ale Adumim, Gush 'Etzyon, Giv'at Ze'ev and Betar was rejected by the Knesset in preliminary reading yesterday.

The bill, sponsored by Likud MK [Knesset Member] 'Ovadya Eli, was supported by 42 MKs from the Likud, Tzomet, National Religious Party, Moledet, United Torah Judaism and SHAS [Torah Observing Sephardim] as well as Labor MK and Third Way member 'Imanu'el Zismann; 48 MKs from Labor, Meretz and the Arab parties opposed it.

Eli said the bill was an attempt to strengthen Jerusalem's status in the face of the "government's willingness to agree to concessions there." He said the government's objections to the bill showed its true intentions for a plan to redivide the city. "Faced with Yasir 'Arafat's declarations on Jerusalem as the capital of a Palestinian state with him as its head, we see the government voting against a bill which strengthens Jerusalem's status," he said.

Internal Security Minister Moshe Shahal, who answered for the government, said past Likud governments had not changed Jerusalem's status or annexed "Greater Jerusalem" to it.

Shahal also said the bill completely conflicted with the agreements Israel had signed with the Palestinians and therefore the government was obliged to oppose it. "The bill would be a significant violation of the agreement between Israel and the Palestinians," Shahal said.

**Minister Shahal on Palestinian Election Security**

*TA1701184796 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1500 GMT 17 Jan 96*

[Report by David Ze'ev — recorded]

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] [Ze'ev] Public Security Minister Moshe Shahal says Palestinian leaders have voiced concern over the prospect of Jewish extremist violence aimed at sabotaging Saturday's [20 January] voting. Minister Shahal says Israel has responded that it will do its part to ensure that does not happen. At the same time, the public security minister says Israel made it clear to the Palestinians that Palestinian violence could have an adverse affect on Saturday's scheduled balloting.

[Shahal] Certainly, we emphasized that we are worrying about the possibilities of the Palestinian fundamentalist groups who oppose the peace process and the election, and we are responsible for what is happening everywhere, certainly including Jerusalem. I am certain that we will be able to do so. We are concerned whether they are doing their best to prevent terror attacks on Israeli civilians. I am very sorry about what happened yesterday. It is of great concern to us and to the relations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority.

[Ze'ev] And, Minister Shahal said the Palestinians have been told to step up their security measures.

[Shahal] We are coordinating the activities, and there is a lot of joint effort to try to prevent what has happened. We know that they were upset with the attack on the two soldiers near Halhul and we are demanding more effective steps to be taken.

[Ze'ev] Likud Chairman Binyamin Netanyahu says the Palestinian Authority has been sending out the wrong message to the extremists.

[Netanyahu] It must crack down on these terrorists rather than giving 21-gun salutes to a master terrorist like Yahya 'Ayyash. What 'Arafat should do is to dismantle the Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] and Islamic Jihad organizations. [passage omitted]

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[Ze'ev] Jewish settler groups say that they expected a terrorist attack like last night's shooting near Hebron, and that the only answer is for the government to stop the peace process with the Palestinians. While demonstrations are planned in Jerusalem this weekend against Palestinian council elections, settler leaders say no attempt will be made to disrupt the voting in East Jerusalem. [passage omitted]

Despite Israeli protests, Holland's Foreign Minister Hans van Mierlo this afternoon went ahead with his controversial visit to Orient House. Before he arrived to the country with his prime minister, Israel informed the Dutch that a visit to the Palestinian headquarters in East Jerusalem would be a violation of a delicate status quo in the city, but when the Dutch minister went ahead with the visit regardless of Israel's requests, cabinet Minister Moshe Shahal said the affair was grave and important. He said he would ask for a special debate in the Knesset plenum. [passage omitted]

[Shahal] It is not more serious than the visits of previous foreign ministers. I expressed many times my attitude that the Orient House has no capacity to receive such visits, and foreign ministers do not have anything to do with the Orient House. If they would like to talk about policy, they can do so with the Palestinian Authority in Gaza or in Jericho, and maybe in the future in other Arab cities in the West Bank, but not in Jerusalem. [passage omitted]

**Peace Watch Says PA Suppressing Freedom of Press**

*TA1701145996 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 17 Jan 96 p 2*

[Report by JERUSALEM POST staff]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Palestinian Authority [PA] has since its inception utilized several methods to suppress freedom of the press and stifle its critics in the Palestinian media, Peace Watch said in a report released yesterday.

Since the May 1994 establishment of the PA, its radio and TV stations have given virtually no opportunity to opposition figures to express their opinions.

The two leading dailies, AL-QUDS and AL-NAHAR, have been forced to adopt positions close to that of the PA and Chairman Yasir 'Arafat. Opposition newspapers have, for the most part, been hampered or shut down.

Peace Watch's report found that the PA has utilized several methods to suppress the Palestinian media, including closing newspapers, interfering with the distribution of papers, threatening and engaging in acts of violence against journalists and defenders of freedom of the press, and censoring and dictating newspaper coverage of stories. On July 28, 1994, 'Arafat personally ordered the Palestinian Police to confiscate all copies of AL-NAHAR, the Palestinian paper with the second-largest circulation, effectively shutting down the newspaper.

On July 31, 1994, Fatah members circulated a leaflet in which they threatened the staff of the paper, and the publisher received a threatening letter as well. When the paper reappeared after a 36-day absence, a front-page editorial announced that the paper would henceforth "adhere to the national line."

According to the report, agents of Col. Jibril al-Rujub's Palestinian Preventive Security Service [PSS] have threatened Palestinian journalists with physical harm to intimidate them into publishing articles in line with the PA.

In August 1995, Prof. 'Abd-al-Sattar Qasim, a well-known critic of 'Arafat, was shot four times at close range and wounded after he published an article critical of 'Arafat and the PA for being undemocratic. The attack was reportedly carried out by al-Rujub's agents, the report said.

Peace Watch said the PA shut down two opposition papers and its agents burned down a third.

In mid-April 1995, 20 armed agents of al-Rujub's PSS broke into the Jerusalem offices of AL-UMMAH, a small opposition newspaper which regularly published material critical of the PA, and confiscated the galleys of the issues that were about to be published. After the paper issued a public statement attacking PA harassment of the paper, al-Rujub's agents burned down its offices.

**NEQUDA Press Review for Dec**

*TA1501131996*

[FBIS Editorial Report] The following is a review of the December issue of NEQUDA, the monthly Hebrew-language magazine published by the Society for the Advancement of Settlement and Absorption in Judaea, Samaria, the Gaza Strip, and the Jordan Valley, which serves as the political organ of the Jewish settlers in the territories. These reports include summaries of all articles, reports, interviews, commentaries, and other items with a bearing on political affairs published in NEQUDA.

**CONTENTS: 1. Opening Page 2. Blanks 3. News Section 4. To Learn the Lessons of Netzarim 5. The**

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**Test of Faith 6. We Do Not Have a Mandate To Divide the Public**

**OPENING PAGE:**

This 300-word column appearing on page 3 and signed by Editor in Chief Uri Elitzur is entitled "To Speak To Them," and calls for a settler dialogue with the Palestinian Authority, PA.

**BLANKS:**

This 2,000-word article on pages 11, 12, 13, and 14 by Shlomo Filber elaborates on the conspiracy theory of Rabin's assassination, noting that the "blank bullets theory is grave, but provides a logical if shocking answer to most of the questions and queries surrounding the prime minister's assassination." According to this theory, the assassination was "a Shin Bet work accident." The Shin Bet knew everything in advance, "from the assassin's identity to the assassination's timing and location. The plan was to load his revolver — without his knowledge — with blank bullets, allow him to arrive at the scene and open fire, and then catch him in the act." The article goes on to speculate that "the echelon responsible for the Shin Bet could have been tempted to approve such a dangerous plan due to the enormous political gain such a drama could have given the prime minister and his party."

**FROM THE NEWS SECTION:**

1. PLO-Hamas talks continue, but the PLO is not demanding that Hamas, Islamic Resistance Movement, stop attacks against Israel, only that it become a political body acting within the PA framework.

2. Changes in public transportation routes in the wake of IDF redeployment will require adjustment by settlements.

3. IDF to issue map detailing routes recommended for Israelis traveling in the territories.

4. Remarks made by ministers over the last month reveal the permanent arrangement as Peres sees it: Israel will preserve the undivided Greater Jerusalem, the 'Etzyon Bloc, the bloc of settlements in west Samaria, and a security hold on the Jordan Rift Valley.

5. Rabbi Yehuda 'Amital 12 years ago issued a "din rodef"

6. The use of post offices for elections in East Jerusalem for the autonomy council contravenes Israeli law.

7. Right-wing jurists criticize police for filing charges against dozens of settlers.

8. Foreign Ministry said to base its daily Internet update almost entirely on DAVAR and HA'ARETZ, while almost completely ignoring YEDI'OT AHARONOT and MA'ARIV.

9. Civil Rights Society criticizes administrative decrees recently issued against right-wing activists.

10. Customs director general expresses concern about large-scale smuggling of various goods from the autonomy area to Israel.

**TO LEARN THE LESSONS OF NETZARIM**

This 600-word article on page 21 by Netzarim settler Ya'ir Hiller says that two years have elapsed since the "signing of the miserable agreement" with no lessons having been learned for the future. It goes on to elaborate on the plight of Netzarim as the guinea pig of the Oslo A accord. Contrary to the agreement's stipulations, travel to and from this Gaza Strip settlement is severely restricted. In order to prevent a similar situation in Judaea and Samaria, "the settlers must unite and provide maximal backing to each other, thus preventing a divide-and-rule policy from being used against them." Whereas in Netzarim travel is possible only by calling up a special escort service, this situation must not recur in the West Bank. "Only a determined stand by a large and united public behind each settlement will stop the erosion that is leading the settlements toward suffocation and siege."

**THE TEST OF FAITH**

This 1,000-word article on pages 26 and 27 by Rabbi Mordekhay Broyer expounds on the difficult situation faced by the religious public in Israel in the wake of the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] redeployment and Rabin's assassination. God will have no quarrel with those who are willing to concede parts of Eretz Yisra'el because they believe this will put an end to our plights, but he will have a quarrel with the religious public, "because this public has seen God's great hand at work in all the events of the last 100 years, from Herzl's appearance through the Balfour Declaration, the establishment of the state, and the Six-Day War." "Yet despite all this we have sunk to the depth of despair. When He showed us a bright countenance, we followed Him joyfully, while now, when it seems He has hidden His face from us, we have given up all our faith and are unwilling to wait even one short hour to see how things turn out." The author goes on to criticize the religious public for giving up its faith in Israel's approaching redemption just because of the unexpected withdrawal. The article ends on a note of encouragement, expressing the belief that "the hand of God has brought about all the miracles I have witnessed in my life. The State of Israel is the

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beginning of our redemption — even if the Oslo accords are implemented. God will not disappoint His nation and will bring His redemption by means of the State of Israel. He will do this, however, not according to our dictates, rather in other ways known only to Him."

## WE DO NOT HAVE A MANDATE TO DIVIDE THE PUBLIC

This 2,500-word article on pages 54, 55, 56, and 57 by 'Azri'el Ari'el notes the national shock and trauma caused by Rabin's assassination and stresses the need to carry out a soul-searching process. Remarking that the religious sector is not responsible for the assassination, the author comments that "it is only natural that a public whose dearest beliefs have been totally maligned, whose entire undertaking is in the balance, who feels that its life and that of its children is facing ever greater risks, and who is devoted to the state, which feels betrayed and brutally trampled on by the government, would experience very difficult emotions." The article notes that only a small minority gesticulated the grave shout that "Rabin is a murderer," whereas most of the religious public has kept its pain inside, "anxiously, angrily, and helplessly observing the government's moves with a bleeding heart and great concern for the future of the state and its very existence." The article goes on to blame the late prime minister for pushing the religious public to the wall and ignoring all pleas to change the government's behavior. A terrible danger of civil war looms ahead, leaving us with two options only: "first, continuing the political struggle against a government which is accelerating the political process as much as it can, and in doing so risking a civil war, God forbid, and second, lowering the level of our activity while taking the serious risk of endangering our entire settlement enterprise."

The article observes that the settlers will preserve their hold on the ground and will continue the settlement activity, "but we will have to suspend the active struggle of demonstrations and militant protest activities. We will do this not because our way is wrong, but because, out of a sense of heavy national responsibility, we are unwilling to triumph at the most terrible price of dividing the nation. We have not received a mandate for this from God, in Whose name and for Whom we act. We do not want victory at all costs. Woe to such victors."

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**Prince Hasan Remarks on Policy Toward Iraq**

*JN1701211796 Amman Jordan Television Network in English 2000 GMT 17 Jan 96*

[Announcer-read report over video from the "News at Ten" program]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Crown Prince Hasan today met with participants in a special symposium in Amman on the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. The symposium was organized by the Arab Thought Forum. In remarks during the meeting, the crown prince said there has always been a distinct line in Jordan's policies between its duty and legitimate role and interference in internal affairs, which, he said, was never part of Jordan's policy.

His highness also commented on the lukewarmness [as heard] of the international community regarding the suffering of the Iraqi people. His highness said the current restructuring of international relations should be best used as a formula to resolve the world crises by resorting to reconciliation and understanding as the case was in former Yugoslavia.

**'Arafat Arrives in Amman, Meets Prime Minister**

*JN1801093496 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 0900 GMT 18 Jan 96*

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister al-Sharif Zayd Bin-Shakir met with His Excellency President Yasir 'Arafat, head of the Palestinian National Authority, at al-Nadwah Palace this morning.

They discussed issues of interest to the two fraternal sides. They also discussed developments in the Palestinian-Israeli talks on many topics and the issue of the Palestinian elections to be held on Saturday [20 January].

Royal Court Chief Marwan al-Qasim and Foreign Minister 'Abd-al- Karim al-Kabariti attended the meeting on the Jordanian side. Hani al-Hasan and the Palestinian ambassador in Amman attended the meeting on the Palestinian side.

His Excellency President Yasir 'Arafat arrived in Amman this morning by way of the King Husayn Bridge.

**Briefs Bin-Shakir on Elections**

*JN1801102896 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1000 GMT 18 Jan 96*

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister al-Sharif Zayd Bin-Shakir met with Yasir 'Arafat, head of the Palestinian National Authority, at the Guest Palace today. Marwan al-Qasim, chief of the Royal Hashemite Court; 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti, minister of foreign affairs; and Hani al-Hasan, member of the PLO Executive Committee, attended the meeting.

'Arafat told reporters that during his visit to the kingdom he explained the details of what was agreed with the Israeli side on a number of points of disagreement on elections in Hebron and Jerusalem, and the promises made by U.S. Vice President Al Gore and the EU representative to follow up this issue.

'Arafat hoped the Palestinian elections will be held in a democratic and brotherly atmosphere.

Yasir 'Arafat arrived in Amman via King Husayn Bridge this morning on a brief visit of few hours. He left Amman this morning. He was seen off by the Jordanian foreign minister.

**Al-Kabariti: Amman Not To Join Military Alliances**

*JN1801090096 Amman AL-ASWAQ in Arabic 18-19 Jan 96 pp 1, 19*

[Report by Nasir 'Arif]

[FBIS Translated Text] Jordanian Foreign Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti said that Jordan does not intend to join any new military alliances being formed in the region.

Al-Kabariti was replying to recent reports that U.S. Secretary of Defense William Perry during his recent visit to the region had proposed the establishment of a military alliance between Israel and some Arab countries. Al-Kabariti said that Jordan's joining such alliances is completely out of the question at the moment as the relations Jordan seeks to establish with world countries are partnership relations to enhance the atmosphere of peace in the Middle East region based on the economic, social, security, and humanitarian underpinnings for which the Barcelona conference convened.

Al-Kabariti said that the recent talks with NATO were just a dialogue NATO said it wishes to hold with Mediterranean Basin countries to enhance joint cooperation and not to have these countries join the alliance.

On the latest developments on the issue of Jordanian detainees in Israel, al-Kabariti said all Jordanian detainees in Israeli jails are expected to be released in the near future after the issue was discussed with Israeli officials.

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**Lahd, Peres Cited on SLA Role, Hizballah**

*NC1701165096 Kafr Killa Voice of the South in Arabic 1430 GMT 17 Jan 96*

[FBIS Translated Text] South Lebanese Army [SLA] Commander Major General Antoine Lahd has said that there can be no peace without preserving the SLA soldiers' rights and dignity and the rights and dignity of the those living in the border area.

He said: Despite the facilities we have offered to its agencies in the area, the Lebanese state regards us and the inhabitants of this area as agents and holds us responsible for the Israeli army's entry into and presence in the area. The Lebanese state also helps the saboteurs in their attacks on the border area. He added: This issue was the subject of discussion in Jerusalem today between Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres and me.

Major General Lahd made these remarks in an interview with our correspondent upon his return to the border area from Jerusalem.

After meeting Gen. Lahd, Peres said there can be no genuine negotiations with Lebanon unless the Lebanese Government curbs the harassment and pursuit of SLA personnel and commanders and ends the freedom of action given to the subversive Hizballah organization.

Peres added that the [Lebanese] decision to track down SLA Commander Mag. Gen. Lahd is a deliberate insult that cannot be ignored. He cautioned the Lebanese Government that the time has come to draw lessons from its mistakes. Peres praised the SLA's role in maintaining security and peace in the border area and on Israel's northern borders.

He said that Israel regards Major General Lahd as a first-class Lebanese citizen and commander of an army facing the most extremist and fundamentalist party in the Middle East. He asserted that what worries Israel is the Lebanese Government's stands allowing, on the one hand, Hizballah saboteurs to act freely in the Lebanese territories while Iran supports and funds this organization, which is wreaking havoc in Lebanon. On the other hand, Peres added, the Lebanese Government does not realize the real security value of the SLA presence.

Peres said: I emphasize that Israel has no designs on any inch of the Lebanese land and that it seeks a peaceful settlement with Lebanon. The Lebanese Government is mistaken if its believes in the possibility of combining peace and terrorism.

He noted the need to incorporate the SLA in the security arrangements that will be applied if a peaceful settlement is reached. He stressed that Israel will not hesitate to strike at terrorism in Lebanon with every means.

Peres said that the Lebanese Government will also be mistaken if it believes that peace is possible without agreeing on a suitable and respectful inclusion of the SLA and residents of the border area in a future Lebanese structure like all the other forces that have worked for peace. He asserted that Israel attaches importance to this army's role proceeding from the responsibility toward the entire border area.

**SLA Fears Defections Due to Low Morale**

*TA1801093996 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 18 Jan 96 p A8*

[Report by Eytan Rabin and Aluf Ben]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Senior IDF [Israel Defense Forces] sources are worried that SLA [South Lebanese Army] soldiers might defect, fearing that Israel will abandon them once it signs a peace accord with Syria and Lebanon and that they will be viewed as collaborators.

A senior Northern Command officer has said that there is a fear that the SLA soldiers may lose their sense of confidence and, worrying about the fate of their families, may join Hizballah. The SLA soldiers fear that they will be left to deal with the Lebanese Army and Hizballah on their own after the IDF withdraws. The officer added that Hizballah has claimed in the past that SLA soldiers were joining its ranks. In most cases, these were soldiers who were kidnapped but stayed on to serve with Hizballah.

In internal discussions, SLA soldiers have been exhibiting low morale and questioning the need to continue to fight alongside Israel. According to a military source, SLA soldiers recently received salary hikes and other benefits, but the atmosphere in the force has remained uneasy. Senior IDF commanders and Uri Lubrani, coordinator of government activities in Lebanon, have been talking to SLA soldiers and commanders recently. [passage omitted]

**French Foreign Minister Visits, Meets Officials**

*NC1701211796 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1630 GMT 17 Jan 96*

[FBIS Translated Text] French Foreign Minister Herve de Charette, accompanied by Lebanese Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz, the French ambassador in Beirut, and Lebanese Ambassador in Paris Naji Abu- 'Asi, met this morning with Chamber of Deputies Speaker Nabih Birri.

The French minister also visited Shaykh Muhammad Shams-al-Din, chairman of the Higher Islamic Shiite

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Council, before going to B'abda Palace where he was received by President Ilyas al-Hirawi from 1315 to 1500.

Before leaving for Damascus, de Charette and his Lebanese counterpart held a joint news conference. De Charette said that French President Jacques Chirac will visit Lebanon in April. He stressed his country's readiness to cooperate with Lebanon in all its projects. He also underlined the French support for Lebanon's independence, freedom, and economic growth.

On the Middle East peace negotiations, de Charette said that there can be no peace if it is not real, comprehensive, and just. He noted that there are opportunities for initiating strong economic ties between the Arabs and Israel.

**Extension of UNIFIL Mandate Requested**

*NC1701204296 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 2000 GMT 17 Jan 96*

[FBIS Translated Text] Lebanon today sent a request to UN Secretary General Butrus-Ghali to extend the mandate of the UN Interim Force in Lebanon [UNIFIL]. The request came in a letter sent by Lebanon's permanent delegate to the United Nations, Ambassador Samir Mubarak.

**Maronite Patriarch on Elections, Other Issues**

*96AA0092A London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 8 Dec 95 pp 1, 6*

["Text" of interview With Maronite Patriarch Nasrallah Butrus Sufayr by Randah Taqi-al-Din in Rome on 7 December: "Sufayr to AL-HAYAH: Concord Has Not Been Achieved; Election Law Required for Everybody; Calls For Trying or Pardoning All Militia Leaders" — first eight paragraphs are AL-HAYAH introduction]

[FBIS Translated Text] Rome — Yesterday, in an interview with AL-HAYAH in Rome, where he is taking part in the Synod for Lebanon, Patriarch Nasrallah Butrus Sufayr said that national concord in Lebanon has not been achieved between the various sects or within each sect and that "there is an opposition, but its opinion is not taken into account. Those who govern do not take the feelings of a large segment of the people into account."

The patriarch called for an election law that "takes everybody's sentiments into account and treats everybody equally" and rejected the principle of dividing some governorates and not others in the election law.

Sufayr expressed the belief that displaced persons are not being returned to their villages with the required speed and that displacement "continues to be a bleeding wound in the side of the Lebanese."

He pointed out that the situation existing in Lebanon does not permit Christians to take part in managing their country's affairs because the government does not treat everybody equally. He pointed out that the Samir Ja'ja', ex-chairman of the disbanded Christian Forces, is facing a fate that no other militia leader is facing. He asserted that it is necessary to "pardon all or try all so Lebanon can march forth, relying on new bases."

The patriarch also noted that ex-President Amin al-Jumayyil is entitled to demand protection guarantees if he decides to return to Lebanon.

He said that the "national will is shackled in Lebanon," that those who rule cannot run the country as the people want it run, and that the economy will not flourish unless a sound policy that enables people to manage their affairs is in place.

Regarding Pope Paul II's visit to Lebanon, the Maronite patriarch expressed his belief that it will take place in about a year when the Synod issues its paper.

Following is the text of the interview:

[Taqi-al-Din] What do you expect of the Synod in connection with the situation in Lebanon, which you have characterized as sick?

[Sufayr] The Synod cannot make miracles, and we must not expect a miracle from it. However, it can spur people to turn to themselves, to their God, and to each other to debate the state of division and aimlessness they have reached after 17 years of internecine war, displacement, and tragedies; therefore, the Synod is a means for the people to return to what we have already mentioned.

The Synod does not mean that several individuals have met and discussed matters, and that is the end of that. The Synod started in June 1991, and we were here in Rome when his holiness the pope announced it, saying that its purpose is to enable the Lebanese to pray, ponder, and think together. This is what has actually happened. As soon as this Synod started, questions were presented to Christians on what they expect and want from the Synod and on the problems they believe the Synod can resolve. A list containing these questions, as well as broad lines, was drawn up and presented to Rome and to the secretariat of the Apostolic Synod. This list, which is tantamount to a charter, which was returned to the Lebanese and was discussed in parishes, clubs, and meetings. There has been a number of proposals, not just by Christians but also by all the Lebanese. In light of the received answers, the synod secretariat declared a working paper, which is

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under discussion now. All participants can express their opinions on the issues it contains.

[Taqi-al-Din] What is this paper based on?

[Sufayr] The working paper includes a number of issues. Some are ecclesiastic and connected with renewing faith in God and with restoring self-confidence and trust in each other. Ecclesiastic issues exist between the Lebanese churches and within each church. All this is connected with rejuvenation, which is the Synod's banner head. Thus, we are rejuvenated by Christ and we unite for a better future. Thereafter, the concept of homeland in its general sense will be rejuvenated. What we expect is to have people discuss matters with each other, forgive each other, make peace with one another, and debate things together so as to entrench the homeland on firm foundations.

[Taqi-al-Din] What is your current evaluation of national reconciliation in Lebanon?

[Sufayr] Regrettably, national concord has not been accomplished. By national concord, we mean concord not just between the various sects but also within each sect. Conflicts surfaced, and they continue to exist among some people. This wound must be healed. Of course, I believe that among people, ideas have gotten closer and that people want to cooperate. Even during the war, people met with each other for private interests. At the leadership level, things are not, regrettably, as well as one wishes. All Lebanese must agree on the constants on which Lebanon must be founded. To date, there is no rapprochement between those who rule and the people generally or between those who are in power and those who are out of power and who aspire for it. In every democratic regime, there has to be a loyal following [al-muwalah] and an opposition. The opposition exists but it is paid no heed and its opinion is not taken into account. The loyal following rules as it sees fit, without consideration for the sentiments of a large segment of the people.

[Taqi-al-Din] Do you think that the coming elections will improve conditions?

[Sufayr] This is what we hope, however, previous elections did not satisfy the ambitions of the Lebanese or their feeling that it was essential to have justice and equality. We have repeatedly pointed out that al-Ta'if Agreement said that elections in Lebanon would be out of the question before the end of 1994 because of the presence of extraordinary circumstances in Lebanon itself and beyond as a result of the war; and because the climate would not permit such elections. Thus, 40 deputies were appointed, however, hardly a few months had passed when it was said that there would be elections and when an election law that does not take equality among people into account was issued. Constituencies were tailored to fit persons and some deputies won with more than 100,000 votes whereas others won with less than 50 votes. This is not justice, and it is why the elections were boycotted. Even in Beirut's by-elections, there was no interest. Rather, there was a high degree of boycott.

As for the future, we have said that there have to be legitimate elections which take everybody's feelings into account and that treat everybody equally so people will elect to the Chamber of Deputies individuals whom they think will represent them in the best manner possible, but it is not just and not right to have Muslim deputies elected with Christian votes or Christian deputies elected with Muslim votes.

[Taqi-al-Din] What is the division you wish to see applied in these elections?

[Sufayr] If governorates are to be divided, then let them all be divided. If they are to be preserved, then let them all be preserved, but it is not fair or right to have some governorates divided and others not divided; or to have some governorates annexed to others.

[Taqi-al-Din] In case this is what is decided, will you boycott the next elections?

[Sufayr] I don't know. I was not the one who called for boycott, and everybody knows this. What we said is that what was happening did not take everybody's rights into consideration. However, people are free to boycott or to participate. It is up to every Lebanese to make this decision individually, letting his conscience be the judge.

[Taqi-al-Din] Have the talks held with you on extension [of the president's term] included the constitutional amendment issue?

[Sufayr] No, they did not include anything. The extension issue was raised with us when we were still in Paris. We said at the time that if we measure the present by the past, then extension has proven to be a failure. We don't have enough room to recount past examples, but now that the extension has already been given, we believe that a democratic system dictates that citizens vote in an ordinary and acceptable manner.

[Taqi-al-Din] What is your evaluation of the return of displaced persons to Jabal Lubnan and of the reconciliation between Druzes and Christians?

[Sufayr] We hope that all displaced persons will return to their villages, lands, and property. However, we have learned from people who have come to us that to date,

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this return is not occurring with the required speed. We hope that the necessary steps will be taken so people will return to their villages with reassurance and so they will coexist as they coexisted in the past. Without such steps, the displacement will continue to be a bleeding wound in the side of the Lebanese. This bleeding must be stemmed. This is a priority and it is what is stipulated in the first provision of al-Ta'if Agreement. Without this return, there will be no coexistence in Lebanon.

[Taqi-al-Din] There are western presidents and officials, including President Jacques Chirac, who have been ceaselessly urging Christians to return and contribute to the reconstruction of their country, else they will miss their opportunity to do so. What is your opinion of these calls and are there guarantees that the west can offer for further Christian fusion?

[Sufayr] Some people think that Christians don't wish to participate in public affairs. This is a mistaken belief. I don't think there is a single Lebanese, be he Christian or non-Christian, who does not wish to take part in government affairs. However, the general circumstance and climate don't permit Christians to participate as they wish, i.e. on an equal footing. Therefore, even deputies find that their margin of movement is very restricted. To date, the government is not treating everybody equally. Some people are jailed whereas others who have committed the same offense as those jailed are holding prominent positions. This is not reassuring. The national will is shackled in Lebanon. Many are powerless. The General Labor Federation is still trying to organize a demonstration or a strike but not permitted to do so. It was permitted once (he said with a laugh). I don't mean to belittle this issue. This climate is not conducive to regaining people's confidence. How can the constitution be amended so quickly, keeping in mind that it is sacrosanct and that it is not amended except for serious national affairs? If the constitution is amended so quickly and simply, then one wonders about the other laws! This is what motivates some Lebanese not to return and not to invest in Lebanon. They fear for their investments from a change of laws. It is essential to have somebody who will guarantee that the laws will remain constant and that returning Lebanese will participate in government to secure the guarantees they need for themselves and their projects.

[Taqi-al-Din] As long as you have talked about those jailed and those holding prominent positions, what will Bkirki's reaction be if the death sentence is carried out against Samir Ja'ja', ex-commander of the Lebanese Forces?

[Sufayr] I don't know. This matter is tied to its time. However, people want justice and justice must include everybody. There is a simple Lebanese proverb which says that equal injustice is justice to the flock.

[Taqi-al-Din] Do you believe that the progress in peace negotiations will lead to a change in Lebanon's domestic conditions, especially in connection with the government program?

[Sufayr] I don't know. It is no secret that under the current circumstances, Lebanon cannot move with its intrinsic power and cannot shoulder its responsibilities toward itself. Lebanon cannot do this unless its decision-making and decision-implementation are free. To date, Lebanon is not free, and it cannot be free as long as non-Lebanese armies continue to be present on its soil. Israel is capable of launching attacks, inflicting losses, and displacing people daily, and this is what it is doing. Some Palestinians continue to bear arms and there are 30,000-40,000 Syrian troops. This situation does not permit one to say that Lebanon is completely free to make its own decisions. We want to have the best relations with everybody, especially with the people who are closest to us and with Syria. A free and sovereign Lebanon enjoying free decision-making can deal with all neighbors on this basis.

[Taqi-al-Din] In what condition is the dialogue between Bkirki and Syria on this issue?

[Sufayr] This responsibility is not the responsibility of Syria or anybody else. It is the responsibility of the State of Lebanon. We are not acting as if we were a state. We are a part of the State of Lebanon and we are not hostile to anybody. Our heart is open and our hand is extended inside and outside Lebanon. We seek friendship and cooperation with everybody, especially with Syria, however, we are extremely keen on our independence, sovereignty, and free decisionmaking.

[Taqi-al-Din] Do you think that the State of Lebanon is currently dealing with Syria with a new approach?

[Sufayr] There are those who say that the Lebanese are the ones who go to Syria to seek its help to implement their own goals and that this is something about which the Syrians are grumbling. As to whether this is true or not, I don't know.

[Taqi-al-Din] Is there anything new about the pope's visit to Lebanon?

[Sufayr] The visit is on the his holiness' mind, and he has asserted this repeatedly. However, it will be made when the right time comes. This synod will, like any other synod, issue a document whose preparation may take a year or more. His holiness may go to Lebanon and sign the document there, as he has done in Africa.

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This is what we hope. I believe that a papal visit to Lebanon is welcomed by everybody.

[Taqi-al-Din] Is suspension of the spiritual summits due to Bkirki's stance?

[Sufayr] I don't believe that the spiritual summits have been suspended. They are not an organization that meets periodically. The summits convene when the need calls for the spiritual leaders to meet. We met previously when the need arose. We are in constant contact, if not directly then through other persons or by phone.

[Taqi-al-Din] Has the issue of moving al-Kaslik University to Dubayyah been turned over to the Vatican to make a decision on it?

[Sufayr] This issue has been exaggerated for no reason. Transfer of the university was in the picture six years ago but there has been no chance to do it. It is still in the picture. However, some misplaced tales have been spun in this regard. The issue is being tackled quietly and deliberately and there is no place for all the clamor that has been aroused about it.

[Taqi-al-Din] Is there currently a chance to improve the Christians' situation in Lebanon?

[Sufayr] We hope that the situation of all Lebanese will be improved. I believe that if everybody's situation is not improved, there will be no room to improve the situation of just one faction. If the Christians' situation is not improved, the Muslims situation will not improve, and vice versa. Lebanon is a single homeland, and all its citizens must be reassured about their fate and future. All citizens must also unite to restore normalcy to the homeland.

[Taqi-al-Din] Don't you think that all sects are experiencing divisions currently? There is tension among the Druzes, for example. Do some parties hope to divide the sects and to weaken their leaders?

[Sufayr] The disagreement among our Druze brothers will be tackled with the wisdom and deliberation for which they are well-known. Druze wise men will find a solution for it. As for the disagreement among the Muslims, it has also been experienced by all the other Lebanese who have fought each other as the Muslims have done. However, we hope that this leaf has been turned over. As to what has been said about Samir Ja'ja', he is a militia leader, and there are other militia leaders who have not met the same fate. If there is justice and equality, everybody should either be pardoned or tried. The war leaf should be turned over forever and all Lebanese must march forth from new bases.

[Taqi-al-Din] You have met with ex-President Amin la-Jumayyil here in Rome. Is there a plan to gather the Christian opposition and how are your relations with General Michel 'Awn?

[Sufayr] Relations with all of them are good, and we hope that whoever has left Lebanon will return. We have met with President al-Jumayyil and he wishes to return to Lebanon. But at the same time, he wants to make sure the protection he requires as a former president is secured. I don't know if such protection is available now. However, this is his right, especially since no deportation decree has been issued against him.

[Taqi-al-Din] What is your evaluation of the government program for Lebanon's social and economic conditions?

[Sufayr] Government work is focused on reconstruction and on enhancing the country, especially the capital, however, this is not enough. Everybody must be reassured, and the door must be opened to raise wages, which at their current levels cannot meet the needs of middle-class families. Monthly wages don't exceed $150 these days, and this is not enough. This is why we hear complaints from all classes, especially from the class that has become a poor class. Lebanon's middle class is about to disappear. There are now a handful of wealthy people and a majority of poor people, and this should not be. Those who know economics say that there can be no prosperity if there is no sound policy that enables people to manage their own affairs. This condition does not exist today. There are numerous things that prevent the Lebanese from feeling reassured. Non-Lebanese labor is competing with the Lebanese in their own country and there is no one looking for a solution for them. I don't know if the solution lies in immigration. Those who have immigrated are reluctant to return, and this is an impediment.

**Article Views Hizballah-Syria-Iran Relations**

*NC1701064596 Beirut AL-SHIRA' in Arabic 15 Jan 96 pp 18-23*

[Report by Zayn Hammud]

[FBIS Translated Text] A high-ranking Hizballah delegation has made an urgent visit to Tehran to meet with Iranian officials and learn the facts about any development in Iran's stance toward Syria and the future of cooperation between the two countries if the stormy clouds in their relationship develop into differences, as suggested by articles in some Iranian newspapers and the cancellation of Iranian Vice President Hasan Habibi's visit to Damascus.

The Hizballah delegation tried to sense how Iran will deal with Syria, the party, and with other issues, especially if negotiations between Syria and Israel, and

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consequently between Lebanon and Israel, end with a settlement this year, and with comprehensive peace prevailing on all fronts of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Just as it had gone, the Hizballah delegation returned from Tehran in strict secrecy. The talks it held and their results remain secret, and so far no impact from the visit on the party's inclinations is evident. More than one leading Hizballah source has denied that the visit was urgent; they describe it as a routine visit. It was noteworthy, however, that after the visit Hizballah leaders and media persisted in talking about the continuation of resistance, as if anyone had raised this subject in the first place. They stressed that the current peace negotiations and the continuing effort to chase out the Israeli occupation forces and their agents are two separate things.

What prompted the urgent visit by Hizballah leaders to Tehran? Did Hizballah fear the impact of any estrangement between Iran and Syria on the party, its unity, and its status? Can it be said that Hizballah might change from a part of the relationship between Iran and Syria to a party to this relationship, supporting one side and opposing the other?

Undoubtedly, appropriate and favorable circumstances help the various pieces within Hizballah's mosaic fit together, integrate, and indeed demonstrate unity within a generally harmonized framework that includes all wings. These wings coordinate among themselves for various reasons, most importantly regional alliances. But as much as this mosaic shows unity and cohesiveness, its various — and sometimes divergent — pieces remain. In emergencies and under unfavorable circumstances, harmony among them is no longer possible, and the door opens wide for their disintegration.

Hizballah maintains good ties with Syria. It embodied these ties in its political program, mottos, stances, actions, domestic alliances, and resistance. Damascus constitutes a strategic and vital rear area for Hizballah. Hizballah would not have been able to embark on major resistance operations had it not been for Damascus' support and backing and the political and diplomatic cover it provides in its haggling with the Americans and opponents in international forums and organizations. Syria's distinct concept of distinguishing between resistance and terrorism has been a constant bone of contention with the West in general and Washington in particular. Damascus has not backed down on this concept and views. The West began some time ago to move its stance and views closer to the Syrian and Lebanese view on this issue. This was evident in statements by certain European officials and other officials in the international arena.

Syria has supported Hizballah greatly in its resistance operations to the Israeli occupation of the south and the western al-Biqa'. Hizballah benefited from this major support not only by augmenting and escalating its military and security operations against the occupation and agents, but also by strengthening its position in the domestic equation. It has become a basic factor in this equation and a key player in Lebanese domestic politics, beginning with the Chamber of Deputies and various official government and public establishments.

At the same time, Hizballah is affected by the political and religious climate in Iran. In this context, many of Hizballah's currents and bases are also influenced by the fatwas issued by the major Iranian religious authorities, particularly the hardline ones, in light of religious and ideological bonds relating to the sources of emulation and the rule of the supreme jurisconsult, and their view of the Muslims' activities in every country. In addition, Hizballah receives support, particularly financial aid, that makes its ties with Iran direct and vital. This reflects on the Hizballah bases and cadres and makes it necessary for its leadership to closely consider the existing intricate relationship between Iran, as a source of emulation, and the Hizballah bases, which may oppose the Hizballah leadership any time over any stance it may adopt and may even seek to install or remove anyone in this leadership.

There is perhaps no end to the talk of the relations between Iran and Hizballah, because they are institutionalized. The radical currents in Iran established Hizballah, but this does not mean that Hizballah is their creation; rather, Iran is constantly needed by Hizballah on all levels. Hizballah cannot be independent of Iran or deviate from what it wants, no matter what it may want or ask.

Hizballah maintained this dual relationship with Iran and Syria. Starting in the early nineties, with the Damascus agreement with the Amal Movement ending the bloody fighting between them, Hizballah secured for itself a new outlook that represented a rebirth for itself based on strong relations with Tehran and Damascus. Its new outlook represented the fruit of the convergence between these two capitals; in fact, it was the unique offspring of the relationship of understanding and alliance between them. It grew and its position became stronger while the popular and organizational tide of its Shiite competitor, the Amal Movement, receded against the rising leadership of its leader, Nabih Birri, who became the Chamber of Deputies speaker.

Hizballah benefited much or knew how to benefit from the strategic Iranian-Syrian alliance, which was based primarily on confronting plans to strike them, fighting the Israeli enemy, and coordinating in all fields

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regionally, in addition to cooperating in bilateral fields, such as the fields of economy, culture, and so on.

Bilateral cooperation progressed very well and became prominent in various fields. Iranian President Hashemi-Rafsanjani publicly declared several months ago that Iran would unhesitatingly accept whatever Syria accepts in the negotiations with Israel. It was a clear, firm signal reflecting the relationship between them. The statement was made before Iranian signals criticizing events at the negotiations began to appear several weeks ago. This was regarded as an Iranian retraction on its stated positions.

With this development and despite the official Iranian disavowal of the Iranian press campaign against Syria, the question that emerges is: What will Hizballah's stand be if the Iranian-Syrian relationship loses its former closeness after having based its policies and views on this relationship's balances and delicate and complicated alliances? Can Hizballah have a stance on what could happen in light of the internal machinations that govern and rule it?

There are different views on this but all agree that the party will be shaken if tension emerges in the Damascus-Tehran relationship and the parties become estranged. Just like a mosaic of different, sometimes clashing, colors and in light of the party's varied structure, no one will be surprised if each trend dissents from the other to highlight its stance and assume its position in a new formula that will undoubtedly be created.

The various views in this regard can be summed up as follows:

The first view says the good relations between Syria and Hizballah have reached the level of a strategic alliance. They say Syria even seeks to strengthen, promote, and continue what has been achieved between the two sides so far. In this, it proceeds from a realistic and principled view, from accurate calculations of local Lebanese and regional politics, and from the common links of brotherhood, geographic proximity, and joint destiny. This makes the relationship between Syria and Hizballah inseparable and indivisible no matter how things change.

The second view says Hizballah gives its relations with Iran precedence over any other. Hizballah accepts what Iran accepts, whatever the consequences. This stems from religious and sectarian links and other bonds between the two sides, especially on the level of the Iran-trained Hizballah cadres, who are often linked with their mother institutions in Iran just as they are linked with their leaders in Lebanon. This is shown in the trend that advocates Islamic nationalism, a trend that exists in Iran as well as in Lebanon and elsewhere.

According to this view, any religious edict issued by Iranian guide Ayatollah 'Ali Khamene'i will have its influence and effect on many, if not most, Hizballah members and supporters in Lebanon. What he has to say will resound, perhaps more strongly than expected, in south Lebanon, al-Biqa', and Beirut's Southern Suburb, where Hizballah exists.

According to those who hold this view, no Hizballah official, no matter how senior, and no leading Hizballah body, no matter how influential inside the party, can loosen these bonds. They will be unable to distinguish themselves — never mind show independence — from Iran's instructions and guidance.

According to the third view, Hizballah will not be free to choose between Syria and Iran because any estrangement between the two allied countries will strike the party's unity at its heart. In this case, the party will automatically disintegrate into conflicting trends and wings, perhaps into several rival parties, leaving no trace of Hizballah as it exists now.

Those adhering to this view say that what the proponents of the first and second views are saying is largely correct and that when the differences explode, every faction in the party will find ripe circumstances to create its own space away from the others.

According to a fourth opinion, Hizballah in its current composition will not depart from its policy; that is, it will keep opposing views within a political framework away from the party and will absorb the various trends within the party through dialogue, something Hizballah has already started to practice among its grassroots. But this does not mean the portion of the party that today forms part of the so-called Resistance wing will leave Hizballah, violate the leadership's instructions, and try to escalate things on the Lebanese, regional, and Islamic levels, as did the Arab Afghans. After the war in Afghanistan and the withdrawal of the Soviet forces, the Arab Afghans left for various Arab and Islamic countries. Media and official circles have been raising a clamor over their role in creating instability in many countries.

Adherents to this view believe the groups that might leave the party could adopt the model of the extremist Islamic groups in Algeria and Egypt and launch a war in Lebanon similar to the wars in those two countries — a war between armed individuals and small well-trained groups and the regime.

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Which of these opinions is the closest to reality, considering the party's position and what it is expected to be in the face of the various possibilities?

Circles close to the party dismiss and deny the conclusions and judgments included in these opinions. They even consider them strange and far from the reality of the party. They do not stem from deep understanding and awareness of the ideas and inclinations simmering inside the party, thinking that makes the party different in many respects from its status at the time of formation. This was demonstrated repeatedly in various activities and achievements scored by the party.

According to the same circles, the party is not a mosaic of clashing colors in which alliance with Iran and good relations with Syria shape its symmetry. It is a party with a unified program and goals and a single organizational structure extending from the top of the pyramid to its base. It is one in which views and opinions complement each other, although they may differ sometimes. But any difference of opinion is a natural and even healthy sign. Strange that such differences are acclaimed in the Western parties in particular while within Hizballah they are viewed as a malady threatening unity of the party. This is particularly true since the existing differences or any that may occur have not reached the point of conflict. Nor will they. Multiplicity of views within a single party usually, if not always, is in the interest of the party's decisionmaking centers, which rely on these views to come up with a decision that is in the nature of the party's goals and principles.

The same circles believe these opinions do not reflect the party's advanced, prominent, and unique Lebanese nature. These opinions portray the party as if it were an Iranian or Syrian community in Lebanon. But the party, which holds firm to its good and strategic relations with both Damascus and Tehran, is a Lebanese party that has its own, clear, and distinguished nature. This became clear a few years ago as part of what was then called the "Lebanonization of the party," which developed and deepened toward integrating the party into Lebanese political life, be it in the opposition, the parliament, the Resistance, or in all types and patterns of public life in Lebanon.

According to the same circles, the party, while refusing to get into a debate about assumptions relating to its position or status if the relationship between Iran and Syria is disrupted, finds only one assumption on the horizon, namely, that of continuing cooperation and alliance between Damascus and Tehran. This assumption, which we must always try to consecrate, is the reality and is for the common good of Iran and Syria and, naturally, for the good of Hizballah, which swims in the pool of their joint cooperation and coordination.

Regarding the Hizballah delegation's visit to Iran, circles close to Hizballah say the Hizballah delegation followed this with a visit to Damascus. The visit to Iran was intended to discuss the impact of developments in Syrian-Iranian relations on Hizballah and Iran's view of the current negotiations on the Syrian-Israeli track. These circles did not explain reports of tension in Syrian-Iranian relations. They were content to say that there was a misunderstanding, that it has been cleared up, and that there is a big difference between Iranian press reports and official statements. The same circles also declined to give details of the Hizballah delegation's talks in Iran, perhaps because of the delicate nature of the views discussed, while tension still prevailed in relations between Damascus and Tehran before President Hashemi-Rafsanjani and Foreign Minister Velayati made their statements in which they stressed adherence to the strategic ties with Syria. These views must have been delicate in view of the Iranian people's and officials' strong desire for elaboration of any issue, be it minor or major, public or private. They discuss every detail and examine everything. They usually expect the worst, which sometimes causes them to exaggerate and miscalculate and mix the realistic with the unrealistic.

In a remarkable official statement on relations with Syria, Iranian President Hashemi-Rafsanjani apparently suggested that he wanted to end continuing speculation in Iran, saying last week that Iran and Syria are linked by a strategic alliance and that Iran will allow no one to break it. His statement sent a message to the Iranians and the rest of the world; many foreign circles and media, particularly in the West, indulged in political analysis and drew conclusions on the prospects for Iranian-Syrian relations, citing editorials in the newspapers JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI and ABRAR. Both papers assailed Syria's stance at the Damascus Declaration countries meeting, the negotiations on the Syrian-Israeli track, and other issues of common concern for Syria and Iran.

Will Hashemi-Rafsanjani's and Velayati's statements turn a new page on Iranian criticism of the Syrian stance and end the Western circles' wager on escalating tension between Iran and its only ally in the Arab region, probably its only ally anywhere? Or can what happened not be eased by statements by Hashemi-Rafsanjani and Velayati? Will it register the first crack in Syrian-Iranian relations? Before answering this question, we must note that developments in bilateral relations before the recent differences arose clearly showed some strain. These developments also clearly showed that the stance in Iran is affected by various views despite Hashemi-

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Rafsanjani announcing that Iran will cling to its good and strategic ties with Syria and Velayati playing down the differences between Damascus and Tehran. Velayati also stressed continuing strategic ties with Syria even though their views on international and foreign policy are different.

Some observers say that the accumulating differences began the moment the Damascus Declaration of the six Gulf Arab states, Egypt, and Syria was born after the second Gulf war. On that day a number of Iranian officials and the Iranian media issued and published statements that focused on Tehran's resentment of the arrangements for the region in general and for the Gulf in particular and the fears that the declaration was part of a series of moves to harass and encircle Iran. The stand then required Syria to try to convince Iran that the declaration did not target it and hence the relationship reverted to its formal status, though laden with some pending issues as a result of the "endless Iranian suspicions."

Over the years it developed that Iran's suspicions were not justified. Iran remained committed to maintaining its alliance with Syria, an alliance whose deep strategic dimensions appeared during the eight year Iraqi-Iranian war, from 1980 till 1988, when Damascus took Tehran's side. This was contrary to the stand taken by the other Arab countries which supported and backed Iraq's might in the war against Iran.

As has become evident during the past three weeks, Iran, or let us say the media circles that criticized Syria's policy, did not expect the statement by the foreign ministers of the Damascus Declaration which supported the United Arab Emirates in the dispute over its three Arab islands. Iran has been occupying these islands since the rule of the deposed shah. This prompted some Iranian newspapers and officials to accuse Syria. Storm clouds began to gather before the public appearance of the editorial in "ABRAR"—which is close to Iranian Foreign Ministry circles, foremost among them Velayati, who in turn is close to Iranian President Hashemi-Rafsanjani—and before the campaign continued with what was written in "JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI," which is close to Ayatollah Khamene'i.

The first indication of these gathering clouds was the tripartite meeting between Syria, Iran, and Turkey. These meetings among the three countries' foreign ministers have been held every three months since the "hammer" operation in north Iraq. But the above meeting was held between the deputy foreign ministers. The results of their talks showed that their only achievement was to review the existing differences between their views on several issues, although what binds Syria and Iran was supposed to make the meeting more fruitful and useful.

With the death of the Israeli enemy Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin and the developments that followed this event, which hinted of progress in the settlement on the Syrian-Israeli track in light of the Israeli concessions, media leaks were coming out one after the other on the world's radios. For example, the BBC, citing a responsible source in the Iranian Foreign Ministry said that the nearer Syria gets to Israel the further it moves from the Iranian stand. This made it appear as if Damascus had in fact completed the settlement with the Israeli enemy at the expense of the legitimate Arab rights, which have always been a principal cornerstone in Syrian-Iranian cooperation, or else these leaks were meant to outmaneuver through the media this firm Syrian stand which rejects any relinquishment of constants, principles, and bases on which the just and comprehensive peace is based. Syria did not follow anyone in these constants, principles, and bases. It was the others who followed Syria's leadership and its wisdom, steadfastness, and good management of the negotiations with Israel—and the United States behind Israel—and prevented any deviation from these constants, principles, and bases. The others changed their stand but Syria did not and will not change it through bargaining and deals like the other Arab parties did.

Prominent Syrian officials are being quoted as saying that the strategic relationship with Iran has not been shaken and is not about to break. These officials say the media exaggerate events. The crisis, if there is one, has to do with a transitory political stance (a statement by the eight-member Damascus Declaration) but it has no significance or results. Sources close to Damascus did not hide their wonder at the Iranian stance expressed in newspapers that are, if not close to, not distant from the decisionmaking centers in Iran. The sources add that Tehran needs to answer several questions relating to the negotiations with Israel, most importantly: Does Iran object to negotiations with Israel? Does its nonobjection to negotiations, as everybody knows, mean that it objects to the existence of the State of Israel? Is Iran against Syria's quest to regain its occupied territories through peaceful negotiations, considering that Damascus is determined to fully restore the Golan and south Lebanon? Does Iran object to relations or improved relations between Damascus and Washington, particularly since Iranian officials, including Hashemi-Rafsanjani, have spoken positively about the U.S. Administration in a bid to improve their country's ties with it? In light of all this, why does Hizballah conduct Resistance operations in south Lebanon? Are they designed to liberate the

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occupied Lebanese territory or to achieve some other purpose?

Another strange thing about the Iranian campaign, the same sources say, is that it treated Syria as if it were responsible for the wording of the final statement of the Damascus Declaration foreign ministers. The campaign started before Iran was informed of Syria's clarifications about what went on during the meeting, during which Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' made tremendous efforts to tone down the language of the paragraphs concerning Iran. He was successful with regard to the paragraph on support for the UAE's sovereignty over the three islands in the Gulf and referring the case to the International Court of Justice. In this regard, a "strongly worded" paragraph was taken out of the statement. In this paragraph, the "ministers expressed their concern at Iran's growing programs to possess and develop weapons of mass destruction and the threats these programs pose to security, stability, and peace in the region." During the meeting al-Shar' said that such a trend would mean the eight countries not differentiating between Iran and Israel, which possesses a strong nuclear arsenal.

Then came the announcement of the cancellation of a visit by Iranian Vice President Hasan Habibi to the Syrian capital, two days after the Damascus Declaration foreign ministers' statement, to chair the Iranian side to the Syrian-Iranian Joint Committee, which is chaired on the Syrian side by Syrian Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam. The committee meets every six months and alternates between Tehran and Damascus. The cancellation, which later turned into an indefinite postponement, came as a clear demonstration of the "murkiness" of bilateral relations, although all talk in this regard was later withdrawn and was described to Damascus by Tehran as "newspaper talk" that did not reflect the official stand. Tehran's stance stopped at blaming the Syrian position for the Damascus Declaration's statement.

There is no doubt that the crisis has now abated. Iran made it clear that there was a need to calm things down, particularly because the Iranian party initiated this crisis and then sought to ease the crisis through the statements made by Hashemi-Rafsanjani and Velayati. Damascus, however, was not swayed by these strange, unrealistic, and irresponsible recriminations. Certain diplomats see the following points as signs of the vacillation in the Iranian stance:

First, the Hashemi-Rafsanjani-Velayati wing, which sits at the pinnacle of political power, may or may not be responsible for the press campaign. This makes no difference since it realized that if things continued to develop in that direction, they would create a major diplomatic crisis with Damascus, a crisis that might have been difficult to resolve. This would have meant that if a rupture in relations had occurred, it would have sealed Iran's isolation. Tehran would have unintentionally participated in implementing the U.S. policy aimed at tightening the noose on Iran and gradually bringing the regime down through pressure and blockade and not through direct military strikes. Iran's need for an alliance with Syria is stronger than the latter's need. Therefore, the official Iranian wing immediately sought to calm things down and to cling to its main ally in the region.

Second, the passing or continuing crisis between Damascus and Tehran clearly showed that the internal conflicts in Iran began to take a sharp turn on the eve of the June presidential elections to choose a successor for current President Hashemi-Rafsanjani. The Constitution does not allow Hashemi-Rafsanjani to remain in office for a third four-year term. Several names were given, including Velayati, who is supported by Hashemi-Rafsanjani, and 'Ali Akbar Nateq Nuri, who is supported by the extremist stream. Iranian internal conflicts and elections involve any domestic or foreign issue that concerns Iran. Given this situation, the trend described as moderate would use one-upmanship against other trends in the campaign so as to look more extremist and thus win votes and supporters.

Third: Under such circumstances, Iran appears unable to win any regional position or open any new relationships, at least in the foreseeable future. While the centers of power in Iran agree on general principles and big slogans — because they have to display unity in the face of threats and challenges — they disagree on how these principles and slogans can be put into practice. This means Iran lacks the needed stability and balance if it decides to become a superpower in the region and in Central Asia.

Fourth: As shown by the recent "passing", or "continuing" crisis between Iran and Syria, some Iranian officials are dealing diplomatically with the Syrian ally as if the two countries should have fully identical views on foreign policy. But it is known that each of the two countries has its own interests in the region; they need to coordinate only on issues of mutual concern. Iranian Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati tried to downplay the problem and transcend the crisis when he stressed that the strategic relationship with Syria continues despite differences in views toward international politics.

Does this mean relations between Syria and Iran are heading toward a clash and estrangement at the first test, especially if Damascus signs a peace agreement with Israel?

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Sources familiar with the details of relations between Syria and Iran rule this out. They say decisively that this will not happen. They cite many reasons, some related to the two countries' objective need for continuing relations, and others related to the requirements of the upcoming stage, when the challenges of peace, if achieved, will become greater than those of war.

If a settlement is reached on the Syrian-Israeli track, and consequently on the Lebanese-Israeli track, this will mean the Arab-Israeli conflict has moved to fields other than the battlefield; namely, resisting normalization with Israel and Israel's plans to invade the region economically, culturally, and so on.

Under President Hafiz al-Asad, Syria, which employed and is still employing every possible Arab, Islamic, and international effort in the battle against Israel in war time, will, in peace time — if it ever comes — work with the same spirit to use every possible Arab and Islamic capability in the struggle against Israel. Iran — and the trends supported and embraced by it — is one of these capabilities. It will certainly find in the Syrian position what will allow it to play a role in the new regional situation, which will definitely emerge if the settlement is achieved.

Perhaps this is what makes Hizballah leaders confidently say that the party will spearhead the campaign against plans of normalization with Israel in peace time, just as it spearheaded the fight against Israel in war time.

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**Radio: Israeli Statements 'Casting Doubt' on Talks**

*JN1701200796 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1230 GMT 17 Jan 96*

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Dear listeners: The year 1996 may become a year of peace in the Middle East only if Israel meets the requirements of a just and comprehensive peace, according to optimistic statements by the U.S. Administration and the concerned capitals. But statements by Israeli officials have begun casting doubt on international efforts to promote the peace process. The Israelis are talking much about peace, but without approaching its essence. Some Israeli officials even seek to link Israel's internal problems to the peace process by involving the cause of peace in the internal political brokerage market. This will harm peace efforts. In order for these efforts to succeed, peace should become a strategic option of top priority. Only then will peace advocates, as well as those who are eager to achieve peace, have the courage to recognize its requirements, bases, and principles, which are clear to everyone and which accept no other interpretations.

The peace process began in Madrid as a result of international legitimacy; UN Security Council Resolutions 242, 338, and 425; and the U.S. initiative that was based on these resolutions. All these resolutions clearly stipulate Israel's total withdrawal from the Golan to the 4 June 1967 border and from the occupied Lebanese territories. But these elements are not included in the Israeli statements, as though Israeli officials had not heard about them and had not been aware that the Madrid conference and the entire peace process had been based on these elements.

Commitment to peace depends on implementing these bases. This is what Syria is doing. Every official Syrian statement and even press analyses stress international legitimacy and its resolutions as a basis for the desired peace. Syria wants only to exercise its rights and its full sovereignty over its land. It insists on this, and realizes that such a peace can live and last, because it will return the rights of everyone, will safeguard dignity, and will become a fertile land for confidence. Only such a peace can guarantee the security of everyone.

In this context, Syria is concerned about equality [tasawi] and equitability [takafu'] in any security arrangements on both sides of the border within the framework of the peace bases, and not outside it, while some Israeli officials are trying to overburden peace [tahmil al-salam ma la yatahammal]. The international resolutions are the only framework that can guarantee everyone's rights so that peace can be born strong and capable of lasting.

**Paper on Link Between Syrian, Lebanese Tracks**

*JN1801109396 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0545 GMT 18 Jan 96*

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] Under the headline "Time: A Fabricated Crisis," AL-BA'TH focuses on the attempt by certain Israeli quarters to pressure the peace talks by alleging that the time factor is more important than the requirements and basic elements of peace. The paper clarifies that this is a fabricated crisis.

AL-BA'TH stresses that it would be a big mistake to use this issue as a means of pressure in the negotiations instead of responding to the basic elements and requirements of peace.

The paper adds: The Peres government may be in a hurry because the general elections are approaching. Others may be running against time for domestic political reasons related to the elections. However, this hurry must not mean haste, triviality, extortion, and positions that do not agree with right, the resolutions of international legitimacy, and the bases set for the peace process.

AL-BA'TH adds: Those who feel that time is pressing them can choose to shorten or cut the road, surmount the obstacles, arrive at positive results in the negotiations, and, consequently, arrive at settlement and peace. This can be achieved if they remove the fabricated obstacles set earlier on the path of peace by the Rabin government — obstacles that pushed the negotiations into a long, deep state of dormancy. This can also be achieved if they stop trying to utilize the negotiations to achieve what they failed to achieve through the past, various wars and if they accept in reality, and not only in words, the principles of the peace process and the resolutions of international legitimacy.

AL-BA'TH says: Syria wishes to arrive at peace very quickly. But the question is: Would the other party accept the just and comprehensive peace, which can endure and which can guarantee the interests and security of all parties, as quickly as Syria wishes to arrive at peace?

AL-BA'TH concludes by saying: The time factor crisis is an extortionist attempt, fabricated by certain Israeli parties. Syria has always been prepared to achieve peace, provided its conditions, requirements, and basic elements are achieved. It is certain that the peace process sponsor does not find any difficulty with the Syrian side when he moves within the context of the agreed-upon principles of the peace process and the text and content of the resolutions of international legitimacy.

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Under the headline "The Pan-Arab Position," AL-THAWRAH discusses the Syrian-Lebanese ties and the connection between the Syrian and Lebanese tracks of the Middle East peace process. AL-THAWRAH says: With full support from Syria, the Lebanese legitimate government overcame the difficulties and the consequences of the crisis. It was also able to start a construction and building drive and to crown the national reconciliation march by political and social reforms, which can terminate once and for all the roots to sedition and strife, and which can place Lebanon on the path of full recovery in all fields.

AL-THAWRAH adds: Lebanon, which is recovering now, began to build itself with the help of sisterly Syria in accelerating steps. Lebanon is confident that the links it has with Syria will reflect positively in the battle for peace, which requires coordination and cooperation among all the Arab parties involved in the peace process. This is especially the case with Lebanon, which is linked to Syria by a brotherhood of blood, history, worries, and the same cause. This is also the case as Lebanon views Syria as an impregnable fortress that secures for itself and the Arabs the necessary pan-Arab protection at the time of the battle for peace, and in a way that guarantees for the Arabs in general, and Syria and Lebanon in particular, the return of their territory and rights in full.

AL-THAWRAH says: Just like the Golan Heights, Southern Lebanon has always been the focus of the talks Syria holds with all those it meets with, particularly the U.S. sponsor, who is exerting intensive efforts to achieve progress on the Syrian track that will be followed by progress on the Lebanese track. It is now a well-known fact that any progress on the Syrian track will have a positive impact on the Lebanese track. There is also another fact, which must be underlined time and again — that Syria would not sign a peace agreement before Lebanon, nor would Lebanon sign a peace agreement before Syria. This fact is associated with the two inseparable tracks.

AL-THAWRAH concludes: This is an indisputable fact, which all those who are casting doubts must know. Syria does what it says it will do, and Syria has always been faithful to its pledges in every national and pan-Arab issue. This is the reality of Syria. It is confirmed by events and is realized by every sincere national and pan-Arab individual, who takes a sincere stand on the nation's crucial issues.

**France Seeking 'Political Participation' in Region**

*JN1701203596 Damascus Syrian Arab Television Network in Arabic 1830 GMT 17 Jan 96*

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Translated Text] French Foreign Minister Herve de Charette and his wife arrived in Damascus this evening on a visit to the Syrian Arab Republic. He was received at Damascus International Airport by Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' and his wife, senior Foreign Ministry officials, French Ambassador in Damascus Jean-Claude Cousseran, and Embassy staff.

In statements to reporters, de Charette stressed that France considers this visit and the good relations between Syria and France to be important. De Charette said: During my visit, I will hold talks on issues of common interest, the Middle East peace process, the future of the region, as well as issues dealing with neighboring countries. The French foreign minister noted Syria's important role and great influence in the region. De Charette added that France wishes to focus the greater part of its efforts to develop a French policy toward the Arabs to increase its effectiveness in the region, in view of its historical links to the area.

The French minister described Syrian-French relations as good. He said that these relations have witnessed major developments in recent months. He referred to the important meetings between the two sides, including Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam's recent visit to France.

Regarding the role which France will play in the Middle East peace process, de Charette said: We are ready to help our friends if they so desire. This is the first thing that I will discuss with the Syrian friends.

In statements to a SANA correspondent in Paris, de Charette stressed the strength of Syrian-French relations and growing Syrian-European relations. He called for continued economic cooperation and political dialogue between the two countries on all international issues of common interest.

The French foreign minister expressed his belief that his country should play an effective role in the Middle East region. He noted that France, like other European countries, will not be content with the role of financier at the economic level. Indeed, it seeks effective political participation.

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De Charette praised Syria's policy and its role in reinforcing stability in the region. He said: Syria is an important player in the Middle East, and its role in the peace process is influential. Furthermore, he added, Syria is an important partner in the new European-Mediterranean relationship.

The French foreign minister said Paris is seeking to have an Arab policy, which General de Gaulle has called for — a policy based on developing joint French-Arab interests and opening new horizons for these interests, such as what occurred at the Barcelona conference.

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## Afghanistan

### UN's Mestiri Continues Efforts To Resolve Crisis

*LD1801114996 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 18 Jan 96*

[FBIS Translated Text] The UN secretary general's special envoy for Afghanistan today left for Kabul for talks with that country's officials. Before leaving Islamabad for Kabul, [Mahmoud] Mestiri met and exchanged views with our country's ambassador to Pakistan and thanked the Islamic Republic of Iran for its efforts to end the civil war in Afghanistan and for providing humanitarian assistance to that country's people.

Also in a separate meeting this morning with our country's ambassador, Choong-Hyun, the UN special rapporteur for Afghanistan, expressed appreciation of Iran's humanitarian actions and its efforts to resolve the problems of the Afghan people.

The US secretary general's special envoy is trying to encourage the Afghan groups to reconcile and make peace. He will be meeting the leaders of the Afghan groups within the next few days in Kandahar and Mazar-e Sharif.

This is the UN special envoy's sixth mission to the region to resolve that country's crisis. The latest mission began last Friday [12 January].

### Iranian Envoy Holds Talks With Leaders in Bamian

*LD1701194496 Tehran IRNA in English 1900 GMT 17 Jan 96*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Bamian (Afghanistan), Jan. 17, IRNA — Iranian Ambassador to Afghanistan Gholam-Reza Haddadi in a meeting here today with the Kabul-based chief of Hezb-e Wahdat-e Eslami [Islamic Unity Party] council, Abdul-Karim Khalili, reviewed current developments and an end to the crisis in this strife-torn country.

In the meeting, Khalili praised the efforts of the Islamic Republic of Iran for peaceful settlement of the Afghan crisis.

He said his party has against the civil war and that any peace efforts will be welcomed by Hezb-e Wahdat.

Haddadi replied that Iran has always called for a peaceful settlement of the clashes and has no spared no efforts in this regard.

Haddadi said that a durable peace in Afghanistan would enable the Islamic Republic of Iran to actively contribute to the reconstruction of this neighbouring Muslim country.

The Iranian ambassador returned to Kabul this evening at the end of his one-day visit to the central city of Bamian, where he picked ground for construction by Iran of two health and educational centers.

### Opposition Rejects Saudi Power Transfer Plan

*LD1701183996 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0240 GMT 17 Jan 96*

[FBIS Translated Text] Reports reaching Radio Message of Freedom say the groups opposing the Kabul administration have rejected a Saudi plan for the resolution of the Afghan crisis. The reports add: Recently the Saudi Arabian Embassy in Islamabad informed the Afghan jihadi parties about the plan, which envisages the transfer of power from Rabbani to Mohammad Yunus Khales or Mohammad Nabi Mohammadi. The plan also envisages a meeting of the jihadi leaders in Jalalabad for talks on forming a government acceptable to all parties involved in the Afghan problem and the creation of a security force to be stationed in Kabul after Rabbani and Ahmad Shah Mas'ud [words indistinct].

The reports say that during their talks in Islamabad, the Taleban and High Coordination Council representatives opposed the transfer of power to Mohammad Yunus Khales and the allocation of the Defense Ministry portfolio to Rabbani and Ahmad Shah Masud. [Words indistinct]

### Mestiri To Offer 'New Suggestions'

*BK1501012396 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1400 GMT 14 Jan 96*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The UN special envoy on Afghanistan, Mr. Mahmoud Mestiri, says he will put forward some new suggestions to rival Afghan factions in a bid to evolve a mutually acceptable mechanism for power transfer from beleaguered Afghan President Borhanoddin Rabbani. Talking to APP [Associated Press of Pakistan] in Islamabad today, however, he said his new suggestions should not be construed as any fresh peace plan. Mr. Mestiri, who arrived in Islamabad on Friday to launch his new peace initiative for Afghanistan, said he has had preliminary talks with representatives of some Afghan opposition groups in Islamabad who also made some new proposals. He said his proposal for 28-member interim council is still alive, though it may need some changes.

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**Former Leader Calls UN Peace Mission 'Futile'**

*BK1801120596 Hong Kong AFP in English 1141 GMT 18 Jan 96*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Peshawar, Pakistan, Jan 18 (AFP) — Former Afghan premier Gulbuddin Hekmatyar Thursday accused several neighbouring countries of interfering in his war-wracked country, and called for fresh peace talks among the armed factions.

The leader of the Hezb-e-Eslami faction also told a news conference here that a peace mission to Kabul by a UN special envoy underway was futile.

India was providing assistance to the Kabul regime led by embattled President Borhanoddin Rabbani, Hekmatyar said.

He also accused Iran of backing the Rabbani regime and Russia of fuelling the fire "to avenge its defeat in Afghanistan."

Pakistan was criticised by the former Afghan premier for failing to back the creation of a government led by ethnic Pushtuns in 1992, the main ethnic group in his faction.

Hekmatyar said Indian help to Rabbani's besieged regime was "so open that it needs no proof," accusing New Delhi of providing assistance including military training and medical facilities to Rabbani's commanders.

He said Iran was also supporting the current Kabul administration, pointing out that Tehran has now formally called for recognition of the Kabul regime's legitimacy, although its two-year tenure ended more than a year ago.

Hekmatyar dismissed a peace mission underway by UN special envoy Mahmoud Mestiri as a futile exercise, just as the peace negotiator left Islamabad for Kabul for talks with Rabbani and his allies.

"Mestiri should take rest as he has already wasted a lot of time," Hekmatyar said.

Mestiri arrived in Pakistan last week in a bid to broker rapprochement among the rival Afghan factions.

In November he proposed a transfer of power from Rabbani to a 28-member council, an idea rejected by several factions including the Islamic Taleban militia which is besieging Kabul and controls around half the country.

Hekmatyar, who had headquartered himself in the eastern Afghan town of Saroobi, said his group was interested in "brotherly relations" with all, and called for multi-party negotiations to end the bloodshed.

"We are ready to talk to all groups to resolve the crisis," he said.

Leaders of all Afghan parties should start negotiations to form an interim government, he said. Power should be transferred to an interim government and all types of external interference should cease, he said.

The interim government should hold elections for a "strong and stable government" once peace is restored, Hekmatyar added.

Hekmatyar also criticised Islamabad's failure to back a Pushtun-dominated government after the downfall of the communist regime of Mohammad Najibullah in April 1992.

He blamed the continuing fighting on the fact that the Islamabad-brokered accord resulted in the installation of a "weak government" dominated by the minority Farsi-speaking Tajik community.

**'Internecine Fighting' Between Parties Reported**

*LD1701180396 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0240 GMT 17 Jan 96*

[FBIS Translated Text] Reports reaching Radio Message of Freedom say that internecine fighting between the Kabul administration commanders has been going on for some time. The reports add that heavy fighting broke out between the commanders of Shura-e Nezar and Ettehad-e Eslami [Islamic Union] in Konduz Province yesterday. Both sides have used light and heavy weapons in the fighting. As a result 11 people from the combatant sides have been killed or wounded. Baryalai, a Shura-e Nezar local commander, is among the wounded. Recent reports say that the fighting between the two sides is still going on.

**Government Ammunition Dump Explodes in Panjsher**

*LD1701172896 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0240 GMT 17 Jan 96*

[FBIS Translated Text] An explosion occurred recently at a Shura-e Nezar arms and ammunition dump in Panjsher. [Words indistinct] so far no information has been received on the loss of life. [Words indistinct] a local Jam'iyat-e Eslami [Islamic Society] commander has been arrested in connection with the explosion.

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## Bangladesh

### Radio Says Strike Peaceful; AFP Reports Clashes

*BK1701155296 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in Bengali 1500 GMT 17 Jan 96*

[FBIS Translated Text] The dawn-to-dusk strike called by major opposition parties nationwide passed off peacefully today. Traffic was off the roads in the capital though a large number of rickshas plied. Private offices and business centers remained closed, but government offices functioned as usual. Railway sources said that railway links was almost normal in Dhaka, Sylhet, Rajshahi and Khulna sections. It was however disrupted in other sections. Bangladesh Biman flights operated as usual during the strike. Sadar Ghat ferry terminal sources said that ferries operated as usual. Our Chittagong representatives said that the strike was observed peacefully in the port city.

[Hong Kong AFP in English at 1244 GMT on 17 Jan in a Dhaka-datelined item reports the following: "Sporadic blasts from home-made bombs rocked Dhaka Wednesday while activists clashed with police as the opposition enforced the new year's third anti-government general strike.

"Witnesses said opposition activists clashed briefly with the police in downtown Motijheel district as they marched through the streets chanting anti-godernment slogans before the strike ended at dusk Wednesday.

"Home-made explosives were also heard in the area, but there were no immediate reports of injuries from the blasts or clashes.

"Meanwhile, western diplomats shuttling between the opposition Awami League leader Sheikh Hasina Wajed and Zia were not optimistic at breaking the political deadlock which sparked the calls for a nationwide stoppage.

"One of the six-member team of intermediaries, which includes diplomats from the United States, Britain and Japan, said, 'At least for the moment I am pessimistic and there is a bleak possibility of any side giving in further.'

"'Nobody really knows what lies ahead,' he added.

"Opposition sources said the dawn-to-dusk action was effective in all major cities. Police and paramilitary Bangladesh Rifles patrolled the capital as some commuters walked to work on a the chilly winter's morning."]

### 'Backstage Parleys' To Resolve Impasse Resume

*BK1801105596 Dhaka THE DAILY STAR in English 16 Jan 96 p 1*

[Report by Nazmul Ashraf and Mizan Ali]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Negotiators of the ruling BNP [Bangladesh Nationalist Party] and the Opposition yesterday held backstage parleys on the possibilities of sharing of executive powers between the president and the head of the proposed advisory council to oversee the coming general elections, according to competent sources.

The negotiators also exchanged views on deferring the election schedule, seeking judicial reference on the interim administration and shifting of the polls schedule further.

Details of the latest negotiation bids were not available until late last night.

Negotiations between the ruling party and Opposition resumed after diplomats of some friendly countries started mediation efforts in resolving the lingering political crisis.

Earlier, a top leader in the Opposition said that if the discussions on power-sharing and other issues progressed, the leaders of the Opposition parties, which had representation in the Fifth Parliament, might go for a formal dialogue with the ruling party to reach an accord on the interim government and other related matters.

An influential minister, when contacted, confirmed that they were in contact with the Opposition. The BNP negotiators were assigned to make fresh attempts for a negotiated settlement with the Opposition on the basis of the idea of power-sharing in the interim administration .

In another development, some representatives of foreign missions and the donor agencies are likely to meet prime minister and BNP chief Begum Khaleda Zia and AL [Awami League] chief Sheikh Hasina today to discuss the political developments.

UNB adds: Informal contacts between the ruling party and Opposition negotiators continued yesterday without any headway in resolving the crisis over a caretaker government to conduct the next general elections.

The back stage parleys are being mediated by US Ambassador in Dhaka David N. Merrill who was learnt to have separate meetings yesterday with Commerce and Information Minister Shamsul Islam and Amir Hossain Amu, the key negotiators from the two sides.

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Shamsul Islam, a key negotiator from the government side, said he is still hopeful of a solution.

Replying to a query about the ruling party's written proposal on the formation of interim government, he said the government side had already placed its proposal to the opposition leaders during the previous discussions.

Besides, Shamsul Islam said BNP Secretary General Barrister Abdus Salam Talukdar had already spelt out the government proposal which appeared in the newspaper.

He, however, did not say if he had communicated the government proposal to the opposition through the U.S. ambassador yesterday.

Opposition negotiator Amir Hossain Amu had a meeting with Ambassador Merrill at his residence last night.

**Election Commission To Welcome Observers**

*BK1701024696 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in Bengali 1500 GMT 16 Jan 96*

[FBIS Translated Text] Chief Election Commissioner Justice A.K.M. Sadeque held a meeting in Dhaka today with foreign agencies and correspondents operating in Bangladesh. At the meeting, he briefed newspersons of the various steps taken by the Election Commission [EC] to ensure holding upcoming parliamentary elections in a free, fair, and impartial manner. He said that the EC has already been made considerably stronger by modifying various laws and regulations. Justice Sadeque said that as part of this arrangement, the administration, police and government media were brought under EC control for election-related activities immediately after the election schedule was announced. No officer or employee of these departments and organizations can be transferred without the permission of the [word indistinct] EC. The chief election commissioner said that during the voting, the commission will be authorized to immediately cancel voting if irregularity is noticed at any voting booth of any election constituency. He said that electoral investigation committees comprising justice department personnel have been set up in every district to send reports to the EC before conducting investigations into post-election irregularities.

In reply to a question concerning the countrywide drive to recover illegal arms, Justice Sadeque said that the concerned force has been instructed to remain neutral during the drive.

When asked whether local and foreign individuals and organizations will be allowed as observers during the coming parliamentary elections, Justice Sadeque said that all local and foreign individuals and organizations interested in monitoring the election will be welcome.

**Protest Held Against Indian Border Attacks**

*BK1701154896 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in Bengali 1500 GMT 17 Jan 96*

[FBIS Translated Text] The Sylhet Division Development Council today held a protest rally against India's construction of a revenue building in the no-man's-land in the (Tamadil) sector, and against the Indian Border Security Force's flagrant attack on Bangladesh Rifles personnel and citizens.

In a press release, they called upon the government to take legal and appropriate steps against Indian attacks and harassment along the Bangladeshi border.

## India

**Cabinet Ministers Resign Over Corruption Charges**

*BK1801010996 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0035 GMT 18 Jan 96*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Dr. Bal Ram Jakhar, Mr. V.C. Shukla, and Mr. Madhavrao Scindia have resigned from the union cabinet. According to Rashtrapati Bhavan [President House] sources, the president has accepted their resignations on the recommendation on the prime minister.

The CBI [Central Bureau of Investigation] had named the three cabinet ministers in the multi-crore hawala [illegal money transaction] transactions. Six other political leaders—including the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] president, Mr. L.K. Advani, and the working president of the breakaway Congress, Mr. Arjun Singh—have already been charge sheeted on the case. The others in the list are: the former deputy prime minister, Mr. Devi Lal; former union ministers Mr. Arif Mohammad Khan and Mr. Kalpnath Rai; and the BJP leader, Mr. Yaswant Sinha.

As reported, the designated court has asked the CBI to file relevant papers in support of the charge sheet under the Prevention of Corruption Act by the 29th of this month. The direction was given by the special judge, Mr. V.B. Gupta, in New Delhi yesterday. The CBI sources said investigations are on against other persons also whose names are mentioned as the recipients of illegal money in the diary of the prime accused, S.K. Jain.

**Rao Rules Out Compromise on Defense Preparations**

*BK1801021296 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 17 Jan 96*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Addressing a youths rally in Calcutta [today], the Congress-I president asserted that

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India will not make any compromise with defense preparedness. Mr. Narasimha Rao said nobody can browbeat us at any point of time. He accused Pakistan of indulging in terrorism and said New Delhi would repulse any attempt by those forces to destabilize the country.

**Leaders, Parties Comment on Hawala Case**

*BK1801010296 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 17 Jan 96*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The prime minister says the law will take its own course in the hawala [illegal money transfer] scandal. Mr. Narasimha Rao said this while talking to reporters at the Calcutta airport before returning to Delhi. Mr. Narasimha Rao was in Calcutta on a day's visit to address a Youth Congress-I rally.

The BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] says the charge-sheet against the party president, Mr. L.K. Advani, will give him an opportunity to prove his honesty. Briefing newsmen in New Delhi today, the party spokesperson, Ms. Sushma Swaraj, asked the government to grant permission to the CBI [Central Bureau of Investigation] to initiate prosecution against the three cabinet ministers. Earlier, Mr. Advani met the Lok Sabha speaker, Mr. Shivraj Patil, and formally submitted his resignation letter. According to the party sources, Mr. Yashwant Sinha has also sought permission from the party high command to resign from the Bihar Assembly.

Commenting on the hawala case, the Congress-I spokesman, Mr. V.N. Gadgil, said the CBI has done its duty. He said neither the government nor the ruling party interferes in the function of the CBI. When newsmen sought his opinion whether the ministers implicated in the case will be asked to resign, he said each minister will decide for himself.

The CPI-M [Communist Party of India-Marxist] has said that the CBI should further investigate all those suspected to be involved in the hawala transactions. The party politburo in its meeting in Madras today said the CBI should prepare a comprehensive report. The All India Forward Bloc has welcomed the Supreme Court's ruling on the case.

The agriculture minister, Dr. Bal Ram Jakhar, has described the CBI's move to indict him in the hawala case as a conspiracy and politically motivated. In a statement in New Delhi today, he described the CBI charges as false, imaginary and baseless.

The parliamentary affairs minister, Mr. V.C. Shukla, has described the CBI move against him as an attempt to malign the image of an honest man.

The designated court has asked the CBI to file relevant papers by the 29th of this month in support of the charge-sheets filed in the hawala case. The direction was given by the special judge, Mr. V.P. Gupta, in New Delhi today. The CBI sources said investigations are on against other persons whose names are mentioned as recipients of illegal money in the diary of S.K. Jain, the prime accused in the hawala case. The cabinet secretary has received a CBI request seeking permission of the government to prosecute three cabinet ministers. Official sources said in New Delhi today that decision on the request is likely to be taken soon.

**National Front Opposition Leader Rama Rao Dies**

*BK1801033996 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 18 Jan 96*

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] The former chief minister of Andhra Pradesh and chairman of National Front, Mr. N.T. Rama Rao, is dead. He was 73. Rama Rao complained of chest pain before getting ready for his morning exercises today. Immediately, the doctors were summoned but they could not save him. [passage omitted]

**New Delhi Reiterates Dialogue Offer to Pakistan**

*BK1501110196 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 15 Jan 96*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] New Delhi has reiterated its offer to resume dialogue with Pakistan on all outstanding bilateral issues, including Kashmir. The external affairs minister, Mr. Pranab Mukherjee, said once the dialogue starts it will help build up confidence, but the talks should begin without any preconditions. Referring to the Pakistan prime minister, Ms. Benazir Bhutto, expressing desire to resume dialogue at a press conference on the New Year Day, Mr. Mukherjee said we have welcomed it but there is no response yet from Islamabad.

Addressing a press conference organized by Delhi Union Journalists today, Mr. Mukherjee said India is likely to become a full dialogue partner of the ASEAN soon. Terming the development as a major step forward, he said till now New Delhi was only a sectoral partner covering areas like trade, tourism, and technology, but now it can have a dialogue on political issues also.

Listing the country's achievements in external affairs in the recent past, Mr. Mukherjee said India was able to impress that there should not be any ad hoc attempt to expand the Security Council. He said in his communications to foreign ministers last year, the center has sought their support to India's candidature for a permanent membership.

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Mr. Mukherjee, who is also the deputy chairman of the Planning Commission, said annual plans for 1996-97 could not be finalized as the present government will have mandate till June only. He said the vote on account would also cover only the first quarter of the year.

**Congress-I Favors Kashmir Elections by Mid-Mar**

*BK1201143396 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1230 GMT 12 Jan 96*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The election commissioner, Mr. G.V.G. Krishnamurthy, says the commission will act according to the direction of the Supreme Court at the earliest to start a dialogue with the government on holding elections in Jammu and Kashmir. Talking to our correspondent, he said the commission has the highest respect for the judiciary. According to the commission sources, an informal meeting was held at the commission in New Delhi today to discuss the directions of the apex court; however, no decision was arrived at at the meeting, as the copy of the Supreme Court's order has not been received so far by the commission.

The Congress-I favors holding of assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir by the middle of March this year, before the Lok Sabha elections. Briefing newsmen in New Delhi today, the party joint secretary in charge of Jammu and Kashmir, Major Ved Prakash, said the Congress-I is going ahead with all preparations for reviving the political process in the state. He said people's response to meetings and rallies is quite encouraging, and restoring of popular government will speed up development in the valley.

**Press Release Issued on Mikherjee's Thailand Visit**

*BK1701022496 Delhi ISI Diplomatic Information Service in English 1503 GMT 16 Jan 96*

[Press release — ISI Headline]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Minister for external affairs, Honorable Shri Pranab Mukherjee, arrived this morning on a three day visit to Thailand for the third session of the Indo-Thai Joint Commission meeting. In the afternoon the external affairs minister [EAM] visited the Grand Palace to pay respects to the mortal remains of the princess mother, his majesty the king's mother who passed away in July 1995. Thereafter, the EAM called on the Thai minister for transport and communications H.E. [His Excellency] Mr. Wanmuhammatno Matha. The external affairs minister briefed the Thai minister on India's economic reforms and outlined in some detail the possibilities of cooperation particularly in the railway sector in light of Thailand's plans to upgrade and expand its railway network. This interalia includes possibilities of supply of passenger coaches and freight wagons as well as possible involvement in track upgradation and construction of new lines. Referring to [Indian Railway Minister] Shri Suresh Kalamadi's invitation to the Thai minister to visit India the EAM expressed the hope that the visit will take place soon. The Thai minister responded warmly to the invitation and said he is looking forward to an early visit. He expressed interest in collaboration and cooperation with India in the railway sector. He added that detailed technical discussions could take place between the railway authorities of the two countries and a working group could be set up for this purpose. Later in the evening the EAM is scheduled to call on the Thai foreign minister H.E. Mr M.R. Kasemsamosan Kasemi and review bilateral relations. The Thai foreign minister is hosting a dinner in honour of the EAM.

Earlier in the day, the senior officials wrapped up their discussions which began yesterday morning and included broadening and deepening mutual cooperation and interaction in diverse fields, including bilateral trade, investment, industrial cooperation, joint ventures, fisheries, agriculture, civil aviation, culture, academic exchanges, science and technology, technical cooperation etc. The discussions were held in a spirit of great cordiality and warmth and both sides agreed that bilateral relations are developing most satisfactorily. India responded with support in particular to the Thai proposal for trilateral economic cooperation between India, Sri Lanka and Thailand. Both sides agreed that the details would need to be discussed further in due course.

[Dateline] New Delhi, 16-01-96

**Trade With China Up, To Hit $1 Billion in 96**

*BK1501014796 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1230 GMT 14 Jan 96*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The trade between India and China is expected to cross $1 billion this year. While the Chinese exports went up by 43 percent crossing $600 million mark, India's exports rose by about 23 percent to over $300 million. The rapid rise in bilateral trade follows a surge in export and import in traditional and nontraditional items.

**Five 'Infiltrators' Killed in Jammu, Kashmir**

*BK1301133096 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1135 GMT 13 Jan 96*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In Jammu and Kashmir, five infiltrators were killed while entering into the Indian territory in Ramgarh sector this morning.

An official spokesman said the Border Security Force patrol spotted a group of intruders entering the Indian

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territory near (Asampura) post in Ramgarh sector at about 0145. The infiltrators were challenged and in the ensuing firing five of them were killed. Security forces recovered 20 [word indistinct] of RDX and other ammunition, including a pistol from the militants.

### Army Chief Views Situation

*BK1401140896 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 14 Jan 96*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The chief of the army staff, General Shankar Roy Choudhury, has said that the terrorists in Kashmir are being increasingly controlled by foreign infiltrators. In an interview to the SAINIK SAMACHAR, a defense journal, on the occasion of Army Day, he said the internal security environment in the valley has certainly improved following counter insurgency operations by the Army and the paramilitary forces. Referring to alleged human rights violations, General Roy Choudhury said the Army has taken strict and prompt disciplinary action in cases where individuals have been found guilty of indiscipline and severe punishment of up to 10 years of rigorous imprisonment with dismissal from service have been awarded to the offenders. Asked about the Army's major achievements last year, the Army chief said despite the heavy counterinsurgency operation commitments, it has trained hard to maintain its high level of operational preparedness.

The minister of state for home, Professor M. Kamson, has said that the center is confident and ready to conduct the much-awaited elections in Jammu and Kashmir. Talking to newspersons in New Delhi yesterday, he appealed to the militant groups to give up arms and take active part in the democratic process in the state.

In Jammu and Kashmir, one of the militants involved in the massacre of 15 people recently in Barsala village of Doda District was killed in an encounter with the Army personnel yesterday at (Bulwano). According to security forces, a massive manhunt has been launched for seven other militants who were involved in the massacre led by an Afghan mercenary belonging to a Pakistan-based militant outfit.

### 'Top Kashmiri Militant' Arrested in Delhi

*BK1701102896 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 17 Jan 96*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A top Kashmiri militant, Mushtaq Ahmad Mir, who was planning to carry out strikes in the capital, has been arrested from a hideout in south Delhi.

Disclosing this in New Delhi today, the deputy commissioner of police, Special Branch, Mr. B.S. Bhola, said that the arrested militant was a self-styled deputy chief of Ikhwanul Muslimeen. He was wanted in connection with the abduction and killing of Professor Mushirul Haq, vice chancellor of the Kashmir University, in April 1990.

Mushtaq was earlier arrested by police in 1992 but had managed to escape in September 1993. He was also allegedly involved in looting 15 lakh rupees from Jammu and Kashmir Bank in Safakadal, Srinagar.

## Iran

### Velayati Comments on Relations With Syria

*JN1801105096 London AL-WASAT in Arabic 15-21 Jan 96 pp 29-31*

[Interview with Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati by Zaki Shihab; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Shihab] There are signs of an Iranian-Syrian crisis. Is the stage of strong ties between Tehran and Damascus now over?

[Velayati] We have good and cordial ties with Syria. This, however, does not mean that the positions which Iran or Syria take in the field of foreign policy have to be identical. Syria is a significant Arab country. In the past few years, our relations were both friendly and deep, both on the bilateral and regional levels. I believe that this cooperation will continue in the future.

[Shihab] Were you surprised by the new momentum in the Syrian- Israeli negotiations?

[Velayati] The progress of events in the Middle East do not promise a positive, clear picture that the interests of peoples and states in the region can be guaranteed. Most of the steps taken so far, or the steps that are being taken now, agree with the economic, political, and security objectives of the Zionist regime and aim at obstructing the states of the region.

[Shihab] Can one speak of an Iranian isolation in the region if Syria and Israel succeed in reaching a peace agreement?

[Velayati] Iran, which has many positive advantages, cannot be ignored or isolated. This is due to the extensive land area we have and the geographic and political nature and the natural resources we enjoy. Additionally, our country is rich with its Islamic culture and old civilization and we also have a deep-rooted revolution and vigilant nation. Peace in the region can be genuine when it meets the needs and requirements of the concerned peoples. Therefore, I believe that Israel will continue to be isolated by the Arab and Muslim peoples of the region.

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[Shihab] To what extent will any decline in the level of your relations with Syria affect your influence in Lebanon, and specifically over the role Hizballah plays in the Lebanese political equation?

[Velayati] The Islamic Republic of Iran has always paid, and continues to pay special attention to Lebanon and holds every respect for it, both the government and people. Relations between Lebanon and Iran are deep-rooted. We as a government in Tehran are always keen to maintain cooperation, improve ties, and develop mutual interests for the benefit of our peoples. Hizballah is an official, recognized party in Lebanon. Resistance against occupation is also a policy advocated by a large segment of the Lebanese people, who struggle to liberate their country from occupation. Therefore, I believe that relations between our countries will develop on these bases.

[Shihab] If Syria regains the Golan Heights and if Lebanon regains its southern part from Israel, do you think this will be sufficient to arrive at peace agreements with, and halt military action against Israel?

[Velayati] The solution to the Golan Heights and the strip in southern Lebanon, which are occupied by the Zionists, is a matter of concern to Syria and Lebanon. Israel's real objective is not to hold on to the territory, but to impose hegemony over the entire region.

[Shihab] It seems that the steps to build the new Middle East are accelerating due to the Arab-Israeli negotiations. Where do you fit in this new Middle East?

[Velayati] We do not believe that the recent developments are progressing in this direction. There are conditions, and perhaps desires and objectives, promoted by the Zionist regime. According to this Zionist desire, if Israel fails to control the region by maintaining its occupation of the Arab territory under the well known international conditions and circumstances, it will seek to control the region by controlling economy and culture in the Arab and Muslim states. We do not think there are signs that Israel is succeeding with this policy. Instead, we believe there is an Arab and Islamic determination to resist it. My explanation for this issue is based on my conviction that there is no similarity or harmony between the Zionist state and the other states in the region, particularly if we remember Israel's history which is replete with crime, aggression, and the occupation of territory.

[Shihab] It seems Iranian-U.S. relations will further exacerbate, particularly following Washington's criticism of your policies. How do you see this new stage and what options do you have to reply to this criticism?

[Velayati] U.S. steps against us violate international laws, the UN charter, and even the Algiers agreement that was signed between us during the hostage crisis. The first paragraph of this agreement clearly enunciates that the United States from the date of the signing of the agreement commits itself not to directly or indirectly interfere militarily or politically in Iranian domestic affairs. The allocation by U.S. Congress of a special budget to combat Iran's policy violates this agreement. From this premise, we have the right to go to international courts because this U.S. behavior means legitimizing terrorism and interference in other countries' domestic affairs. This is an action we do not condone and which we condemn as illegal.

[Shihab] Recent reports mention you have allocated a budget to confront the U.S. campaign. What does this mean, and what avenues will you follow to confront Washington?

[Velayati] Over the past few years, we have shown that we are very sensitive to all that threatens our sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity. We have also shown that we are fully ready to defend this to protect our rights and interests. The protracted war with Iraq is the best example of this fact. In a speech at the Majles Nateq-Nuri said that the Majles and the government will task national security organs to prevent any conspiracies, ward off any foreign threat, and halt any interference in our domestic affairs.

[Shihab] Iran has a special interest in Iraqi affairs. How do you view the situation there, and what happened to the visit you were expected to make to Baghdad?

[Velayati] The interests of Iraq and Iran are as any other interests between two neighbor countries. Their relations should be relations of good neighborliness. One aspect of these relations seeks to settle several issues caused by the war, such as the issue of prisoners, those missing, and the demarcation of borders. These matters need to be solved. As for my visit to Baghdad, it will take place when a solution is reached to all that I have mentioned and when the 1975 agreement signed between our two countries in Algeria is genuinely implemented.

[Shihab] More than one plan was submitted over the past months concerning Iraq's future, and there was more than one version on the role of the Iraqi opposition and some neighbor Arab countries in bringing about a change in the Iraqi regime. What is Tehran's current policy toward Baghdad?

[Velayati] The Iraqi people should have the right to choose the type of rule they want in accordance with their aspirations and wishes. This should reflect the diversity which exists in Iraq and which sets it apart

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from any other Arab country. I would like to explain here that no party from outside Iraq has an interest in imposing its wishes on the Iraqi people. The recent plans were made when some sensed that the Iraqi regime is weak. However, these plans do not fulfill the Iraqis aspirations and wishes. These plans overtly seek to fragment Iraqi territory, to partition it, and to open the door to the big powers to control it. From this premise, Iran's stand is clear. It opposes such plans which it does not support.

[Shihab] In a recent speech, President Hashemi-Rafsanjani called for building better relations among the states in the region. Is this a sign that Iran intends to improve its ties with its Arab neighbors in the Gulf?

[Velayati] In view of the importance which Iran attaches to the ties of good neighborliness with its neighbors, particularly with the Islamic states, we seek to improve these ties in order to guarantee the region's security and stability. The success and development of ties and cooperation will undoubtedly serve our interests and theirs. Differences in opinion and failure to reach understanding serve only the interests of the major powers and the Zionist enemy, the enemy of all Muslims. Therefore, President Hashemi-Rafsanjani's statements more than one week ago fall within this context in order to remove any misunderstanding and resolve every outstanding issue in a spirit of brotherhood.

[Shihab] How do you then explain Iran's position on the dispute with the United Arab Emirates [UAE] over the Gulf islands? Do you feel it is possible to arrive at a peaceful solution to this issue?

[Velayati] We in Iran feel that a direct dialogue between us and the UAE is the best means to resolve any misunderstanding. Shaykh Zayid Bin-Sultan's message to President Hashemi-Rafsanjani may form the basis for any discussion to end the misunderstanding and resolve the outstanding problems. I visited the UAE two years ago, and a team of our experts attended talks with a UAE delegation in Qatar. I renew my invitation to the UAE foreign minister to visit Tehran and discuss this issue. Our past experience confirms that raising the issue of the islands and insisting on raising and deepening the points of contention are only part of conspiracies hatched by the Zionist regime and serve only the interests of the major powers. Therefore, our responsibility as regional states is to try to bring closer the viewpoints, bridge gaps, and ease tension in the region through dialogue in order to guarantee stability and security.

[Shihab] The United States and Israel continue to raise many questions on Iran's nuclear capabilities. What is your country's policy in this field and what is your stand on the nuclear issue in the Middle East?

[Velayati] We are not of those who have conspiratorial theories in the region and the world. To judge Iran's intentions, one has just to refer to the relevant international organizations which deal with nuclear energy and which are aware of what Iran is doing in this field.

The International Atomic Energy Agency visited Iran many times, and its experts carried out inspection operations on Iran's activities in the nuclear field. The international officials' statement in this respect confirm that Iran is carrying out its work, experiments, and studies within the confines of international regulations.

As a signatory to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty [NPT], we believe in restricting our use of nuclear energy to peaceful uses.

I would like to mention here that in 1974, we were the first country to call for a Middle East free of all weapons of mass destruction. That's why we believe the Zionist state's possession of the nuclear weapon, nuclear material, and the destructive nuclear heads that were produced in its plants, and its continued refusal to sign the NPT, or allow international inspectors to inspect its installations are factors that cause instablity and threaten security in the Middle East.

### Tehran Notes Life Sentence for Egyptian Clergyman

*NC1801065896 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0430 GMT 18 Jan 96*

[FBIS Translated Text] A court has sentenced Muslim Egyptian clergyman Shaykh 'Umar 'Abd-al-Rahman to life imprisonment. American legal officials have accused the blind clergyman of involvement in operations against the Washington government.

News sources report that nine other Muslims have been sentenced to various prison terms on charges of cooperating with Shaykh 'Umar 'Abd-al-Rahman. All the defendants have appealed their sentences and have pleaded not guilty.

### Coup Seen Tied to Bid To Stop Muslim Election Win

*NC1701072196 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0445 GMT 17 Jan 96*

[Commentary by the News Research and Commentary Group]

[FBIS Translated Text] Sierra Leone was the scene of another coup d'etat yesterday. In this bloodless coup the

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head of Sierra Leone's military council left the country safely and his deputy, a general, took over the rule.

While Sierra Leone is calm now, curfew restrictions have been in force throughout the country, most notably in the capital, since last night. The secretary general of the Commonwealth, of which Sierra Leone is a member, has issued a statement expressing the hope that the changes in Sierra Leone's capital will not break the former military leader's promises to establish democracy in the country.

But the Sierra Leone coup is linked with the upcoming presidential and parliamentary elections scheduled for February; most forecasts emphasized that the United Revolutionary Front, one of the largest parties in the country, the party of Sierra Leone's Muslims, would win. These forecasts lead political and press circles to conclude that yesterday's coup was designed to introduce changes to prevent the victory of this largest and most powerful party in the country.

Sierra Leone has seen domestic unrest and civil war. Current developments can lead to fresh violence and unrest, especially considering that the largest party opposing the military regime sees the democratic means of acquiring power being blocked and interprets the current coup as a dam in front of its victory.

**British Official's Anti-Iranian Comments Criticized**

*NC1701114396 Tehran JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI in Persian 9 Jan 95 p 16*

[Political commentary: "London's Ambassador of Discord in Manama"]

[FBIS Translated Text] British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd, who visited Manama recently, said on Thursday [4 January]: "Iran is a potential and permanent threat to the world, especially the Middle East and Africa."

Speaking at a news conference, he said: "Iran has supported subversive activities in the Middle East and Africa and is using religion as a political instrument." He added: "If Iran's policy is not changed, the region will be under Tehran's constant threat."

These remarks by Hurd, expressing such a precise stance, show who is trying and why they are trying to render the region insecure, paving the way for domination and diktat through the sale of their military materiel to the regional countries.

For 17 years, governments, the interests of which have been harmed in Iran, have resorted to every effort to force this revolution to kneel. For at least half of this period the Iranian people were involved in a destructive and unwanted war. Every pressure was inflicted on the Islamic Revolution and the Islamic Republic. Huge funds were allocated to terrorist activities and efforts made to overthrow the revolution. They deployed their most modern military materiel in the Persian Gulf in a bid to show the Islamic Revolution their teeth. They sparked off an organized cultural onslaught to rob the system of its Islamic values, values that rose from the revolution. They placed the country under economic siege and did their best to spread discord and hatred between Iran and neighboring Arab governments. All these efforts have proven futile, which is why they continue.

Unfortunately, in relation with this, Arab governments have been influenced by such organized propaganda by the British, the Americans, and the Israelis. The Arab governments are generally unaware of the threat that emanates from the center of the world of Islam and threatens their entire existence and political, cultural, and social identity. That threat is the Zionists; intentionally or not, they strive to strengthen this threat, which is like a cancerous tumor on the sick body of the world of Islam.

Many of the differences in the form of territorial or political disputes among the Arab regimes in the southern Persian Gulf stem from this discordant arrogant propaganda. The major objective of the Western governments in creating political tension in the region is, as pointed out, to render the regimes in this region dependent on the West and to create favorable grounds for the sale of European and American war materiel to the Persian Gulf. This is why the Western governments create a "crisis" out of nothing and magnify the smallest crisis as much as possible.

Uglier than this horrifying policy is the intentional or unintentional accord of the misled Arab shaykhs, preparing the ground for the implementation of these policies.

The futility of the efforts of the various powers and governments to revive relations with Islamic Iran has led to their spiteful and hostile efforts to cut the bonds of friendship between the regional Arab countries and the Islamic Republic of Iran during the past 17 years. This is not so complicated that the Arab governments in the region cannot understand it.

Douglas Hurd's remarks were more than an effort to spread discord and enmity in the region; they reflected the disgraceful defeat of efforts by London court diplomacy to establish the relations that Buckingham Palace wants with Iran.

This behavior is not alien to this foreign policy. The Americans behave in the same manner. They too want

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to avenge their failure to establish relations with Iran, using every crime and abominable act against the Iranian people. The $20-million budget for terrorist acts against Iran is the most recent sign of such abominable behavior.

It is not in the interest of the Arab governments to become an instrument for the implementation of such policies in the region. If they review their foreign policies vis-a-vis the Islamic Revolution, away from American, British, and Israeli influence, they will be better able to tell the great difference between their independent assessments and what their masters dictate to them.

**UK Said Trying To Win Saudi Favor by Exiling Activist**

*NC1701091796 Tehran RESALAT in Persian 6 Jan 96 p 16*

[Political commentary: "Democracy at the Service of Dictatorship!"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The British Home Office has ordered the expulsion of Dr. Muhammad al-Mas'ari, the leader of the committee defending human rights in Saudi Arabia. This committee, which started operating two years ago, has played a major role in revealing the terror and crushing dictatorship in Saudi Arabia. This is why Riyadh has always tried to use its financial and commercial influence to silence the voice of opposition.

But these measures have failed to decrease the concern among impartial circles over the domestic situation in Saudi Arabia. In the past two years protests against human rights violations have become one of the major problems facing Riyadh's foreign policy, such that some Western powers—under pressure from circles at home and even for the sake of maintaining their image—warned the Saudi leaders of this weakness.

The more political circles have pressured the Al Saud family the more Riyadh has used the weapon of pressure to stifle opposition in Britain.

Under these conditions, the Saudi deputy interior minister stated that to safeguard trade relations and national interests stemming from these relations, al-Mas'ari would be expelled.

During recent months, London has been under increasing pressure from two major forces:

1. The Saudi Government, which has threatened not to sign any new agreements with British companies if al-Mas'ari's actions in London are not controlled; and

2. The British companies, especially the industrial-military complexes that have been the other side of this agreement with Riyadh or have sent representatives to Saudi Arabia to sign an agreement.

Last year Britain's exports to Saudi Arabia exceeded $2.3 billion. British Defense Ministry officials visited Riyadh to sign agreements on arms purchases. Britain started a type of covert rivalry with its Western friends—America and France—in the Persian Gulf. Therefore, Britain's fear that these rivals might overtake it in the race can be a major reason for silencing Riyadh's opponents in London.

Freedom of speech and laws and regulations on refugees—within British and international laws—have been trampled upon with London's recent policy. For the sake of continuing the export of arms to the most dictatorial of regimes, Britain has accepted intervention in its judiciary system.

London is trampling on many of the principles it advocates while political circles and Western governments remain unable to assess the political future of Saudi Arabia after the new ruler comes to power. By accepting the risk of domestic intervention, Major is trying to act faster than his European rivals in satisfying Amir 'Abdallah. King Fahd's successor will not let London's decision to exile one of the greatest opponents of the royal family to the remote Dominican Republic go unrewarded, something that will help the smooth transition of power.

Events have been staged by a government that has been trying for years to protect Salman Rushdie. If al-Mas'ari is a threat to a family with several thousand members, a family running Saudi Arabia's political affairs, 1 billion Muslims consider Rushdie the number one enemy of Islam and the Muslims for insulting their Islamic beliefs. London's democracy has not been willing to decrease its unjust support for Rushdie under Muslim pressure and the dictatorship in Riyadh is not willing to pressure London to defend Islamic sanctities. While Major is trying to gain international support for Rushdie, al-Mas'ari gets exiled to one of the world's smallest countries so that the voice of human rights supporters in Saudi Arabia will remain unheard.

This shows that when it comes to national interests in any type of regime—dictatorial or democratic—the political regime adopts a dictatorial nature. Even worse than this is that a government that claims to be among the historic pillars of democracy is now serving one of the world's vestiges of dictatorship.

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**Successes in Trade With Turkmenistan Detailed**

*NC1701115196 Mashhad EQTESAD-E KHORASAN ECONOMIC WEEKLY in Persian 5 Jan 96 p 3*

[Report on a meeting of Khorasan Governorate's export committee in Mashhad on 4 January]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Khorasan Governorate's export committee held a meeting on 4 January that was attended by the permanent committee members, the Khorasan governor general, and the ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Turkmenistan.

Engineer Mir Abu-Talebi referred to Turkmenistan's capabilities of which Iranian investors and traders should take advantage. He said: As the preliminaries had already been dealt with, during Dr. Habibi's recent visit to Turkmenistan we signed agreements worth $150 million. We managed for the first time to convince the Turkmen side to make the downpayments in cash and to implement the current agreements.

These include agreements on the supply of water, power, and fiber optics, the elimination of problems in the construction of six silos, and the Ashgabat-Gok Teppeh highway. Other agreements include the sale of 554 Peugeot automobiles and 50 city buses. Half of the buses have already been delivered to the host country, which has made a favorable impression on the public.

Abu-Talebi then referred to the problems of Iranians who had incurred losses and said: They fall into three categories: Those who have signed contracts with the government sector that have not been implemented; this problem can be resolved. All those who have the relevant documents for the government should submit them to me and we will follow them up.

He said: The other category is of those who have signed contracts with bona fide parties. The same law applies to other countries as it does to ours. Therefore, as an embassy we cannot do anything except discuss it unless the Turkmenistan courts decide they should be reimbursed and then we can follow up the redress of their rights through the embassy. [passage omitted]

The third group hastily deposited cash in the bank to be changed into Turkmenistan's currency and no solution has been found for these people. One of the reasons is that the manat [Turkmenistan monetary unit] reserves have not been evaluated and it is not known whether they were accrued from imports or domestic sales. Another reason is that they have to accept the consequences of the Turkmenistan Central Bank's decisions as this is not the case in our country. [passage omitted]

Abu-Talebi then referred to the scope for exporting technical and engineering services and said: In view of the $110 million credit allocated for urban construction in Ashgabat and the expertise of that city's current mayor, we can plan and implement most of the projects that they need by providing the services of Iranian specialists. The latter have greater expertise and more reasonable prices than those of other foreign contractors. This could be discussed during the Ashgabat mayor's upcoming visit to Mashhad when he is to inspect various projects. He stated: If the organizations and departments active in this field stick with it and devise programs, I would be willing to provide maximum cooperation in soliciting credit and collaboration from the Turkmen side for any appropriate project. In view of the decisions approved in the area of exporting services, I imagine that in these few months the- credit ceiling for this [Iranian] year and the beginning of next year will be covered. [passage omitted]

Continuing his remarks, he stated: For the first time we have been successful in purchasing $35 million worth of cotton against the amount that was outstanding in our favor. We have also received a license from President Hashemi-Rafsanjani to import strategic [preceding word in English] goods. Therefore, if the Turkmens are ready to pay in cash in foreign exchange, we can sell these goods to them. As for value-added goods such as flour, macaroni, sugar, and shortening, we can import wheat and export it to them as flour so that our domestic mills can be activated as well.

Later during the session, Engineer Mofidi, the Khorasan governor general, referred to the agreement that the Turkmens had signed with Moscow for the sale of gas. He said: The foreign exchange accrued from this agreement will be $1.9 billion of which Moscow has paid 40 percent in cash and 60 percent will be paid in kind, that is, in the form of required goods. Hence we can benefit from a Russia- Turkmenistan-Iran trilateral agreement and find an appropriate way to reach one. A tripartite session is to be held with Yeltsin when the Sarakhs-Tajan railroad is inaugurated and we can submit these proposals then.

Mofidi stated: In proportion to its population, Turkmenistan's foreign exchange earnings are high. We can import the goods we need from Moscow and reciprocally, we can provide Turkmenistan with the commodities that it needs. Similarly we are absolutely ready for a trilateral Iran-Armenia-Turkmenistan agreement, which has not materialized due to Armenia's reluctance. Khorasan can play an active role in this. Or in a trilateral agreement with Russia, Khorasan province could be a suitable place to implement such a contract.

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He elaborated: As for the export of engineering and technical services, the Ashgabat-Gok Teppeh highway is a valuable project and the government is in favor of the private sector's active participation in it.

The Islamic Majles deputy for Ferdows and Tabas, Engineer Tavassoli, called for the establishment of a center for economic research on Central Asia in order to be able to identify current benefits and aptitudes and act on the basis of knowledge. He then referred to the problems of the large number of carpet-weavers and said: The Majles can present important issues with the opinions of at least 15 deputies and approve them as a bill. The views of those involved will certainly be constructive.

At this session, the inactivity of the Iranian Export Bank in Ashgabat was mentioned and it was stressed that with a change of management, the system could be activated. [passage omitted]

At the end of the session, it was decided that the issue of resuming flights from Mashhad to Ashgabat and Almaty should be followed up. It was announced that the Mashhad-Baku flights would begin on 'Id al-Fitr.

**Saddam Said To Serve U.S., Israeli Goals in War**

*LD1601215996 Tehran IRIB Television Second Program Network in Persian 1925 GMT 16 Jan 96*

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] On 17 January 1991, corresponding to 27th Dey 1369 — that is, five years ago — the coalition forces launched their attacks on Iraq. The subsequent war led to the withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait, and eventually Baghdad submitted to demands of the international community and the anti-Iraqi coalition.

The operations, at first glance, appeared as a limited measure to force Iraq out of Kuwait. Its consequences, however, changed the face of the Middle East and became a basis for future plans implemented in this region.

Following the oil war, a coalition was formed that altered the traditional alliances. Egypt had been ostracized by the Arab states for signing a peace deal with Israel. Thanks to this war, isolated Egypt returned to the Arab fold and all the bitterness left from its peace deal with Israel was forgotten.

The new developments in the Arab world meant there was no longer a united Arab front against Israel. In fact, the Camp David accords delivered the first blow to the Arab front against the Zionist regime; the final blow was inflicted by the oil war. It was after this war that all the Arab states gradually choose the path of compromise with Israel. Even the most hardline enemy of Israel — that is, Syria — also joined the rank of the states that favor a compromise with Israel and began the so-called peace talks.

Looking back at the developments since the oil war makes one conclude that despite Saddam's attempt to present himself as an anti-Israeli hero by firing several missiles on Tel Aviv during this war, he, wittingly or unwittingly, served the interests of the Zionist regime in the best possible manner. In addition, the oil war dragged foreign forces into the Persian Gulf region and paved the ground for permanent presence of U.S. forces in the area.

Thanks to the oil war, America signed military pacts with small states of the Persian Gulf region and strengthened its links with the regional countries. The U.S. Government found an excuse for intervention in the area, and now, by striving to draw new equations in the region, it is trying to secure interests of Washington and its regional ally, Israel. One could, therefore, conclude that the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait realized the dreams of America and Israel. The whole affair ended the way the United States and Israel had wished.

At present, the only way of stopping the detrimental losses inflicted following the occupation of Kuwait is through foiling U.S. efforts in the region. This is possible through cooperation among the regional countries. Increasing cooperation among the regional states would take away the excuse sought by foreign powers to remain in the region. Closer cooperation among the regional states would also increase their capability to stand against unpredictable events of the future.

**Question on Country's Hostility Toward U.S. Answered**

*NC1401153296 Tehran SALAM in Persian 31 Dec 95 p 7*

[From the "Hello SALAM" column]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Unidentified caller] The country's development projects and reconstruction, which build strong economic bases and ensure society's welfare, have made the people hopeful about the future. But with the wrathful international policy we have adopted and our wish to go to war with the arrogant powers in order to fulfill our objectives, it is not clear how successful we will be in this struggle. The wounds of the imposed [Iran-Iraq] war have not yet healed and the impact of high prices and inflation, some of which result from the eight years of sacred defense,

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has not been mitigated. How is it that Syria, our friend, considers regaining the Golan Heights as a condition for peace, while we are not satisfied with anything less than the annihilation of Israel and the Zionist regime? Does our country's economic situation grant us the luxury of such a stand and such confrontation? We are facing a problem in the production of oil—the major base of our country's economy. Off-shore digging and exploration activities are not possible without foreign investment and assistance. We are greatly mistaken if we think that we can take advantage of the rivalry between Europe and the Americans in order to push our programs ahead and fulfill our objectives. They are allies and complement one another. We—like Germany, Japan, and Vietnam, who suffered the most harm from America—need the assistance and cooperation of the world's industrialized countries. We are unaware of American investments in Germany and vice versa. [sentence as published] The world is a market of transactions. This is why we have still been unable to use our country's rich gas resources for exports. How long shall we witness economic sanctions and high prices for imports from various industrial countries?

[SALAM] Apparently this esteemed reader assumes that all of the more than 150 governments in the world have decided to live together in a sincere and peaceful atmosphere like members of one family and to develop the world with one another's assistance. And he assumes that any government that observes the norms of this peaceful life will be blessed with cooperation and development. This reader assumes that the Iranian Government not only has not made any such decision, but that it is hostile toward all governments! He also assumes that the Iranian Government instigated the aggression against Iraqi territory and that it, and not Saddam or the Iraqi Ba'thist Government, is to blame for the wounds inflicted by the war! [passage omitted]

With this prologue, we should state that American and Israeli hostility toward Iran started from the day that the Iranian nation forced the shah to flee, expelled about 40,000 American advisers from Iran, closed the Israeli Embassy, and turned Iran—which was a secure base in the region for America and Israel—into a strong bastion of the struggle for independence. Therefore, the main source of this hostility toward the Iranian nation is the Iranian nation and its Islamic Revolution.

But can anyone blame a country for having made a revolution? In other words, can anyone blame a nation for having resorted to the only possible way to free itself from the clutches of the shah's regime and the American diktat? What proposals are available to the Iranian nation to prevent hostility toward America and Israel? Should a nation apologize for its revolution and return to the situation that prevailed before the revolution? Does this proposal conform with the accepted principle of leading an "honorable life," which this respected listener definitely believes in? And if we abandon this divine-human principle, will such a stand solve any of our problems when faced with the hegemonistic enemy? In other words, will it force the enemy to abandon its hostility and enmity?

To what extent should apologizing for the revolution, abandoning principles, and surrendering to the enemy continue? Until the return of the monarchists? Until the return of the American advisers? Until the recognition of a bloodthirsty and aggressive regime? Until the re-opening of the American Embassy—that is, the U.S. command center in the region? Until American policies are pursued in all parts of the world?

Undoubtedly as long as Iran does not fully return to all the political and cultural conditions that prevailed during the shah's regime, America and Israel will not stop their enmity. And if we return to those days, it will mean that we will once again be paving the way for a revolution because these were the conditions that led to the revolution in the first place. Therefore, why should we turn back and start all over again?

Today there are numerous countries that have very good and close relations with America but who continue to have problems, if not more than ours, not less than ours anyway. And there are many countries that do not have such relations, but continue to move toward development and progress—something that worries the Americans. In conclusion, development and progress require conditions that should be created at home. A development that relies on others will always create dependence and this, in turn, leads to anti-development. And development will be impossible until the necessary conditions are prepared at home. We have discussed this topic in previous articles and we will continue this discussion on other conditions in the future, too. God willing. [passage omitted]

**Paper Warns of U.S. Moves, Closeness to Europe**

*NC1301202796 Tehran SALAM in Persian 3 Jan 96 p 12*

[Political commentary: "Single Containment"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Washington administration incorporated the strategy known as "dual containment" [preceding words in English] in its agenda in the aftermath of the Persian Gulf war in order to rein in the region's two great powers, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Iraq, which had just emerged from the pressures of an eight-year long war.

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At first glance, the sharp edge of this strategy was directed toward Baghdad in view of the crisis Baghdad's rulers created in the region. This made some imagine that the aim of the unprecedented U.S. military presence in the Persian Gulf was solely to combat the Iraqi threat. However, the defeat of Iraq and the developments in its wake clearly proved that despite Iran's positive stances toward the allies during the oil war and the regimes that they support in the region, the United States sporadically manifests its constant hostility and confrontation against the Islamic Republic of Iran. It is not prepared to make any concessions in this regard much less to respond to some officials' leniency by laying any sort of groundwork for friendship and relations with Iran.

The recent U.S. Senate bill allocating $20 million for operations against the Islamic Republic of Iran (which includes $2 million for support to antiregime forces in the country) and efforts to approve a plan to intensify the embargoes against Iran (in continuation of the current sanctions) is one of Washington's latest overt stances against Iran.

The importance of the issue and the nature of the U.S. conduct merits attention from various angles:

1. Unfortunately, our country's official media do not provide adequate information to the public about the nature of the Senate bill and the Washington administration's posturings on Iran. They continue to adopt stances that are ambiguously-worded and full of generalizations about the nature of the U.S. stands. This in itself generates many misconceptions. However, despite the current restrictions on information, the U.S. Senate bill indicates a new approach by the United States toward the Islamic Republic of Iran. This is something that has had no precedent except for the U.S. military attack on Tabas.

Overt support for the forces opposed to the Islamic Republic of Iran, some of which are even carrying out armed operations against it, is tantamount to blatant interference in the country's internal affairs by foreigners such as the United States.

This is because the new U.S. moves should be considered the beginning of a new chapter of overt and open confrontation by this country. Naturally we should equip ourselves accordingly.

2. In the past few years some individuals and officials believed that after his eminence the imam (may God be pleased with him) accepted Resolution 598 we should adopt a more lenient, open, and conciliatory policy toward the West and its friends in the region. It was on this basis that a tangible direction in foreign policy was adopted. This was manifested in the unilateral release of Western and American hostages in Lebanon and an astonishing increase in commercial transactions with the United States.

However, despite the laxity that was shown, no reciprocal action by the United States was observed. In fact, as the high-ranking officials admitted, the level of animosity actually increased.

Despite the results of the recent diplomacy, it is being boastfully stated that the reason for the United States continued hostility is the increase in the revolutionary sincerity of our foreign policy and our officials stands!

3. Some officials who are active and influential in our foreign policy apparatus believe that it is possible to contain U.S. pressure by broadening relations with European countries and granting specific concessions. They think that Washington can be motivated to enter into a healthy rivalry with Europe to take advantage of concessions coming from economic and political relations with Tehran.

Their policy includes groveling before the Europeans even on issues such as Salman Rushdie, human rights, and so on. In their talks and constructive criticism they hand any issue that is the object of U.S. pressure to the U.S. European rivals on a platter, at extremely low prices.

Therefore, Iran's open attitude in its propaganda and policies against the United States as a reaction toward its mischiefmongering was welcomed and has the support of every individual or group who obeys the laws of the Islamic system. However, seeking shelter amid the coterie of European countries and using them as a shield while reneging on some of our principles is extremely harmful and dangerous.

Here we should warn the formulators of such plans: If they really believe that their revolutionary sincerity has increased so much that it caused the United States to adopt such hostile stances, they should be vigilant that their revolutionary stances are the same for the United States' European rivals! They should not go so far as to give commitments in writing to the Europeans on issues such as Salman Rushdie!

Under such circumstances, we see some political pressures from the Europeans and from Germany in particular, which Iran has give a special position.

It would not be too farfetched to state that one of the reasons for the aforementioned moves is to raise the price of closeness to Europeans for Tehran.

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**UAE Claim on Iranian Islands Said Influenced by U.S.**

*NC1201120696 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 4 Jan 96 pp 1, 14*

[TEHRAN TIMES Service report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] TEHRAN—Regardless of how the U.S. takes the concept of the new world order, the international system is moving towards the formation of a multipolar structure of regional economic blocs, Piruz Mojtahedzadeh told the TEHRAN TIMES in an exclusive interview.

Speaking to the daily on the fringes of the Sixth International Seminar on the Persian Gulf and the Changing Structure of the International System, Mojtahedzadeh cited the North American Free Trade Association (NAFTA) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) as examples of regional economic alliances over which the U.S. today wants to dominate exclusively.

He stressed that the U.S. policy in the Middle East and in the Persian Gulf region is to limit the scope of action of the regional countries, not by integration, but by resorting to military presence and power showoff.

On the effect of recent changes brought about by the emerging world order on the strategic region of the Persian Gulf, Mojtahedzadeh said the changes occurred since the 1990 have induced dramatic alterations in security concept of Persian Gulf countries.

The security concerns in the region have shifted from foreign threats via the Strait of Hormuz to internal threats stemming from increased territorial tension, he said.

The U.S. Persian Gulf policies may be categorized into three: Tilting regional balance of power; introducing new security system; Changing the region's political and territorial systems.

(1) Since the collapse of bipolar world order, the U.S. has spared no effort in tilting the balance of power in its fever [as published]. The previous regional balance, with Iran, Saudi Arabia and Iraq as its main players, had no problem.

Pointing to the increased U.S. military presence in the Persian Gulf, he said that the goal obviously is to overstock small regional countries with unnecessary weapons.

Citing statistics to compare defense expenditure of regional countries, Mojtahedzadeh said Iran allocated 4.2 percent of its Gross National Product (GNP) for defense in 1993, Oman 15.3 percent of its GNP, Saudi Arabia 13.1 percent, Kuwait 12 percent, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) 10 percent of their GNPs.

He stressed that the U.S. military presence in the region does not safeguard its security, but it is a factor which can undermine regional security by destabilizing the balance of power.

Tilting the balance of power in the region would foment territorial claims, he said, adding, the best example is the UAE baseless claim on an Iranian island.

(2) Introducing a new security system for the region.

Inviting extra-regional countries to join the security system of the region will further complicate the politics of the region because the countries which have been omitted from this security arrangement consider the situation against their interest. That's why the so-called 6+2 security arrangement for the Persian Gulf region has yielded no fruit, he said.

Mojtahedzadeh lauded the security system proposed by Islamic Iran as the best solution for the region, it is a system in which all regional countries contribute and no outside country is allowed any say.

He stressed that the security system proposed by Iran would work to the benefit of all the regional countries, saying that it is the only system that can guarantee legitimate interests of major oil consuming countries and the continuous flow of oil.

(3) Attempts to change the region's political and territorial systems.

The changing international system has brought a pseudo-self-confidence among certain regional countries. The new self-confidence has manifested itself in the renewed clashes and territorial claims which are offshoots of efforts to change the territorial structure which, bolstered by the U.S. military presence in the region, constitutes the main factor leading to insecurity in the region, he said.

He cited instances of efforts to change borders shared by countries such as Iraq and Kuwait as worked out by the United Nations, Kuwait and Iraq Border Commission (UNKIBC), forcing Iraq to hand over the important part of Um al-Qasr to Kuwait in 1994 and the border dispute between Saudi Arabia and Yemen which has led to many problems.

The UAE claim on the three Iranian islands is another problem caused by the pseudo-self-confidence among the southern littoral states of the Persian Gulf.

The Iranian islands claimed by the UAE, Greater and Lesser Tunbs and Abu Musa, have belonged to Iran

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since time immemorial and the Britain accepted Iran's sovereignty over the islands in 1971, after a year of negotiations pursuant to Iran's protest against Britain which had handed the islands over to Sharjah in 1903, Mojtahedzadeh said.

All of a sudden after 21 years, in 1992, Abu Dhabi backed by the U.S., claimed the islands, he said.

He further stressed that what is obvious today is that the UAE claim is not based on a geographical misunderstanding but is more of a political provocation by foreign countries.

Asked to comment on the islands' importance in the new world order, he said that the concept of a new world order is a misnomer because the order is the same and what is changing is the structure of international system.

**U.S. Moves, Goals in Saudi Arabia Examined**

*NC1201165096 Tehran ABRAR in Persian 3 Jan 96 pp 1, 12*

[Editorial: "The Reasons for the Transfer of Power in Saudi Arabia"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Why did King Fahd delegate control of Saudi Arabia's affairs to Prince 'Abdallah? Before we answer this question, we should refer to the structure of the Saudi Arabian hierarchy. In general, there are three main groups ruling Saudi Arabia:

1. King Fahd's clique: This group consists of the princes of the king, namely Prince Sultan as the defense minister with Prince al-Turki as his deputy, Prince Nayif Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz as the interior minister, and Prince Ahmad Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz as his deputy. Among the other influential individuals in this group are Salman Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, who is governor of Riyadh and one of the four people who hold 63 percent of the shares of the Saudi-Lebanese bank.

2. The Amir 'Abdallah (current ruler) coterie: This group is comprised of Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal, who is the foreign minister, and Prince Talal, who is one of the reformists of King Faysal's era. Since the very beginning of his reign, King Fahd has been opposed to Amir 'Abdallah being the prime minister, heir apparent, and commander of the national guard. However, Amir 'Abdallah's power and influence in the royal dynasty has constantly warded off King Fahd's hostile actions against him.

3. The Faysal clan: This group controls all the institutions that oversee national security and supports Amir 'Abdallah.

It must be said that necessity has forced Fahd to delegate administration of the country to Amir 'Abdallah. There are two points of view on this, domestic and foreign.

From the foreign point of view, Washington would prefer that a faction more in harmony with the White House policies would assume power in Riyadh. Based on this, it would appear that the Amir 'Abdallah coterie, which includes Foreign Minister Prince Sa'ud al- Faysal, would be the best choice. In addition, it appears that King Fahd's heart ailment has plunged the country's foreign policy into turmoil in the region. This was borne out by Qatar's behavior at the Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] session.

The United States was not in favor of such a split in the ranks of the Persian Gulf littoral states, especially in view of its much needed political and economic support on the eve of Middle East peace.

However, from the domestic point of view this choice is of even greater importance. Amir 'Abdallah is considered a pious and virtuous individual in public circles. He has not interfered much in Saudi Arabia's foreign policy and is acceptable to a certain extent to the Islamists as well. He has led a traditional life and has the necessary popularity among Saudi Arabia's important tribal and religious leaders. In addition, experts believe that in view of his unique individual traits, he can fill the leadership vacuum in the Arab world. He planned the al-Ta'if session which opened the way for resolving the differences of the warring sides in Lebanon's civil war. In 1980 he also played the role of mediator between Syria and Jordan.

In view of this, with Amir 'Abdallah coming into power, Washington is seeking to restore the internal political, economic, and social cohesion that had been boosted after the Persian Gulf war when the legitimacy of Fahd's government was being questioned. [sentence as published] In this manner, it wants to facilitate its strategy of development within the framework of domestic convergence and with the slogan of nationalism (in its current interpretation), which is a characteristic of the country's technocrats.

The important pillars of convergence are: The development of socio-political organizations removed from individual perceptions, the development of collective cooperation on the basis of economic nationalism, and the establishment of a capable government. However, it was not possible to achieve these due to the presence of King Fahd because during the Islamic Revolution in Iran and the Persian Gulf, the people realized the helplessness of the Saudi Government, the hollowness of the daunting fences surrounding the Saudi royal family, and the fact

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that their government had a close relationship with the United States.

Therefore, the White House hopes that after Amir 'Abdallah's position is consolidated (in view of his unique personal characteristics), the earlier trend of the people experiencing a basic upheaval will occur gradually. Toward this end, the White House favors the trend of democratization of Saudi Arabia's tribal government and considers it the most important parameter [preceding word in English].

This is because Saudi Arabia has implemented four Five Year Plans and has created an educated middle class that lacks employment prospects, although it is trained in modern sciences and in the fields of commerce and industry, and does not have tribal affiliations. Currently this economic force is seeking political power. To this end, after Fahd stepped aside Amir 'Abdallah's most important move was to gradually try to create a balance of power between the country's political and economic institutions. In view of Amir 'Abdallah's personal characteristics and popularity among the various factions, in particular the religious faction, no one else can play such a role.

Of course one must not expect that this will yield fruit immediately as changes require of time and special cadres [preceding word in English]. However, what is important from Washington's point of view is that conditions are becoming such that the 7,000 Saudi princes could themselves be considered a factor that could generate uncontrollable crises in view of their undefined position in the power system, the rise of an educated class, the dispersing of the centers of power, and the emergence of new political and religious leanings.

Accordingly, Washington believes that it should stop the crisis in the tribal political system as soon as possible because it could destabilize the region and endanger the U.S. primary interest, that is, oil. In view of such a trend, it is not unlikely that Amir 'Abdallah could carry out a bloody purge with the support of U.S. warships in the Persian Gulf against the Saudi princes, the people etc. This would create a balance among the religious leaders, traditional Wahhabis, hardliners and modernists, the Westernized educated class, the Shiites, the Hejazis, the network of elite courtiers, and other movements in the country so that the transitional period could be gotten through with greater guarantees.

**U.S. Budget for 'Toppling' Regime Ridiculed**

*NC1601152096 Tehran ETTELA'AT in Persian 2 Jan 96 p 3*

[Political commentary: "The American Dream of a $20 million Coup—Now, Really!"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] "Twenty million dollars for combating the Islamic Republic of Iran and if possible, toppling its government!" This is the gist of the bill that has recently been approved by the U.S. Administration and Congress (with the efforts of Messrs Clinton and Gingrich) and has refreshed our hearts and minds! [passage omitted]

Twenty million dollars?! Today even the government of a shaykhdom sitting on an oil well—a simple one without any headaches— cannot be easily toppled with this amount. Of course, if it were possible there would be certain other goings-on and calculations behind the scenes!

In any case, it transpires that the advisers to the U.S. Administration are quite unaware of the latest financial trends in the Middle East, especially in Iran, otherwise they would not have sums in mind that are reminiscent of the tenure of the late Dr. Mosaddeq! A coup d'etat for $20 million was the price 40 years ago! Toppling a government for a mere six billion tumans? If we wish to change $20 million at the Central Bank's current official rate of 300 tumans per dollar, that is what the sum will be. Even at black market and foreign exchange smuggling rates, the amount would be paltry. [passage omitted]

However the question arises: Is the official approval of a specially allocated budget in the West—which is the vociferous advocate of democracy, freedom, and civilization—to combat a legitimate national government in the East, one chosen by the people, a sign of barbarity or civilization?! Are such ethics and culture, articulated so blatantly and officially, applicable to the lives of human beings—that is, civilized beings—or to wild beasts?

If the Islamic Republic of Iran could be toppled with 6 billion rials, some opulent capitalists would have done so ages ago. It appears that the Congress' and White House's "class" [preceding word in quotes in English] is rather low, judging from the price they set for a coup! Today, in our society we have magnates in north Tehran who buy and sell houses for this amount! [passage omitted]

Your Excellencies, Messrs Clinton and Gingrich! You are not even intelligent enough that we should send our people and basijis [mobilization forces] against you.

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These vast forces are a resource formed in fateful days [of the Iran-Iraq war]. We will refer you with your $20 million investment to our brokers, who in a few months or probably a few years might be able to pull your economy out of the abyss of "one U.S. dollar is equal to 600 units of foreign currency" to "one U.S. dollar is equal to one unit of foreign currency" and inflict such hell on you that in your fear of inflation you and Gingrich will not even be able to imagine a $20 million coup in your dreams!

However, there are things that can be done with $20 million. The only thing you can do is to give the street urchins some money so that they can throw stones in the dark and break the windows of their neighbors' houses. What else can you do with this sum except some harassment such as breaking your neighbors' windows? In that case, there is also a possibility of the neighbor retaliating and throwing a stone and smashing the head of the stone throwers.

Thousands and millions of people in our country will defend their home (Iran). There are also hundreds and thousands all over the world who do not tolerate throwing stones at the windows of their homes and who will respond to every stone of aggression with a stone in their defense. If 20 million American dollars were worth anything it would have been better to spend it on your country's blacks who are official citizens of your country and who have been able to cause you a lot of worry at times.

If you could work miracles with this sum, you could try to rectify the conditions in your own country. You are oblivious to the problems in your own country but your hearts burn with hate for ours and then some!

Gingrich has said (as clear as day) that we need $20 million to strike a blow to Iran, to defeat it, and (if possible!) to topple it! If these pompous wishes are not interference in others' affairs then, giddy Gingrich, what are they?! Now, really!

**Foreign Ministry Official Discusses Mideast Policy**

*LD1101232396 Tehran IRIB Television Second Program Network in Persian 1945 GMT 11 Jan 96*

[Interview with Dr. 'Ali Khorram, senior advisor to Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati, by unidentified correspondent in Tehran; date not given; from the "Political Roundtable" discussion — live or recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Correspondent] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. Good evening dear and honorable viewers of the weekly political program which is produced by the Second Network's political group. We hope you will find the program satisfactory. [passage omitted]

The topic of this week's program is the issues of 1996. This week our honorable guest is Dr. Ali Khorram, the senior advisor to the honorable minister of foreign affairs. [passage omitted]

The actions of the Middle Eastern countries, contrary to those of European countries, seem to have been reactive. What is your view?

[Khorram] [passage omitted] Now, regarding the Middle East. Contrary to the situation in other regions where developments have been natural, I might not be exaggerating to say that developments have been simulated in the Middle East. This is because countries in Asia sought each other according to their needs. But because policies were to be imposed on the Middle East, this idea of the new Middle East was put forward, and this is being discussed these days. The idea states that an economic axis should be created with a place like Amman, Jordan, as its axis and base.

We know that the idea was first held by Israel as a way out of its past, its former claims and its previous enmity. It was to allow Israel to make a U-turn, to change its image, and to portray a new and clean face in order to attract other countries. The idea was put forward by Israel and then supported by the Americans. The countries of the region suddenly awoke to an idea proposing economic cooperation as its axis, but then they heard that the axis could be political-security cooperation. None of these countries, neither Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt, or the north African countries needed coordination with Israel in order to meet their own needs. The coordination was indeed imposed on them.

In Asia, regional coordination and cooperation started and developed naturally and soon realized the region's potential, but in the Middle East countries are in a sense confused. They do not know what to do vis-a-vis this new idea and theory. As I said, maybe Israel was the originator of the idea which was then imposed on Jordan. Jordan had not prepared itself for this role and had to find its direction in an artificial manner. They first said that this was the new Middle East. Then they said the new Middle East starts from Central Asia and the Caucasus and stretches to North Africa in one direction and stretches from Lebanon to the Persian Gulf in the other direction. The Persian Gulf countries were not and are not prepared either.

[Correspondent] Don't the differences among the countries of the Persian Gulf, on the southern shores of the Persian Gulf, aggravate the situation?

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[Khorram] Of course all regions have their differences of views. If countries set aside their differences and move towards coordination because of their own needs, such coordination would last, would be strong, and would have a future. In the Persian Gulf, the Persian Gulf Coordination Council was not formed on the basis of common cooperation but on the need to support Iraq against Iran in the war. But now that the motivation no longer exists members of the Persian Gulf Coordination Council have started to think of their own issues, and the issues that could have affected the Council's cooperation have been activated. Nevertheless if this organization is to exist in the new Middle East it must definitely have its own interests and it will not play the role that they have been allocated, because the role has not been taken out of choice but as the result of imposition.

[Correspondent] Sorry to interrupt. It seems to me that despite all that, the new world order has failed to succeed in the Middle East either. What is the reason for that?

[Khorram] The reason for that is, as I say, in a way the unnatural fabric of what they perhaps envisaged the new order for. And, on the other hand, there were reactions in the region concerning that. It wasn't as if everyone accepted the order which they had dictated to the Middle East, even despite their confusion and bewilderment. On the contrary, countries like the Islamic Republic of Iran, rose against that order which detracted from the interests of the Islamic states and Islamic ideas and declared their opposition. Therefore, the opposition of countries such as the Islamic Republic of Iran and the agreement of countries such as Syria with that opposition, on the one hand, and, on the other, the unnatural fabric of the region for accepting such ideas resulted in the failure of the new order to find its place in the Middle East. In future, also, those contrasting elements will certainly have an effect and it is hard to say what progress this order will make. Moreover, the new order that was raised by America, will certainly be further weakened with the emergence of new powers. [passage omitted]

**Khamene'i Urges Participation in Majles Election**

*LD1601140496 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 16 Jan 96*

[FBIS Translated Text] His Eminence Ayatollah Khamene'i, esteemed leader of the Islamic revolution, today, at a meeting with the officials of the Ministry of Interior and governors general, referred to the nation's profound and exact intelligence and the continuous presence of the people on the arenas of the Islamic Revolution. He said: God willing, everyone will perform their duties toward the Majles elections in a sincere manner, so that these elections will become a source of pride for the country and Iran's Muslim nation.

The esteemed leader described the various dimensions of the elections, explaining that participation in this important event is a religious and logical duty, serving the interests of the nation.

He said: Participation in the elections is not an imposed duty. It is, rather, like the duties of someone who, according to reason, is bound to safeguard his or her health, inner strength, dignity, glory, and pride.

The eminent leader of the Islamic revolution added: If people want to preserve the strength of the country and their chosen government and prevent the enemy from interfering in their lives and values, then they should be continuously present on the scene and preserve the arena of the elections, just as they have done, thanks to God, from the beginning of the revolution to today. His Eminence Ayatollah Khamene'i explained: The people of Iran are alert, exact, and intelligent. They know what role the elections play in the destiny of the nation and country. The Majles belongs to the people and the people are the basis of its work. People chose deputies acceptable to them on the basis of certain criteria, and place the responsibility of the running of the Majles and other tasks on them. In this way, the country is administered in a manner that is desired by the people.

His eminent leader said that the government, and especially the Ministry of Interior, has the important duty of organizing and holding the elections in a correct manner. He added: The Interior Ministry is a source of trust to the people in the elections and should — in its unique and totally devoted position as a server — make preparations for the participation of people in these elections. People should feel that no one is meddling in the process of the elections and that no one will be allowed to take advantage of the situation. In this way people will take part willingly and approvingly in the elections.

His Eminence Ayatollah Khamene'i said: The heads of groups, parties, and associations; those who have proved themselves in the field of politics; personalities, clergymen and well-known intellectuals, revolutionary and resistant individuals and other prominent figures who are known to the people, should place all their efforts into encouraging people to participate.

Today, everyone, whether they are officials in charge of government departments; clergymen serving in different parts of the country; personalities who have experience of political affairs; those who write, make speeches and who are in charge of newspapers and anyone, wherever

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he or she may be, is dutybound to encourage people to participate in the elections.

The eminent leader emphasized: Anyone who, directly or indirectly, does something that in a way discourages people from taking part in the elections, is not performing his or her duty, just like some individuals who are irresponsible or, perhaps even, affiliated [va-basteh] in action and thought, who write or speak in such a way as to discourage people from participating in the elections.

In another part of his speech, his eminent leader termed as heavy the duties of governors general and said that they should endeavour to create a suitable environment so that people's political and economic tranquillity and security can flourish, and so that tasks and social and individual activities can be carried out correctly from the start. He said this is an important duty for the Ministry of Interior and the governors general. He added: Energetic, spirited, and creative governors general have the important duty of coordinating work with local government departments, integrating provincial activities with those at the center. And they are performing this duty well. The esteemed leader of the Islamic revolution called on the governors general to strengthen their links with God, to practice piety, and to attend to their spiritual values. He said: All tasks should be done to please God. If this is done and people put away their individual problems, bias, political and factional clashes, and perform their duties for the sake of God, then they will obtain God's blessings, paths will be opened to them, and their achievements will have lasting effects.

His eminence considered that among other duties of governors general is the establishment of fair and brotherly relationships with people in the course of their duties. He said: The power of different officials under the Islamic system is derived from Islam and the Muslim nation's great power. Officials should, with reliance on this everlasting power, tackle their duties with strength.

The eminent leader also referred to the recent hue-and-cry created by America and its efforts to deliver blows to the Islamic Republic of Iran. He said: The thing that has defeated all these plots is the power of the Islamic system and Iran's Muslim nation which is, in reality, the manifestation of divine power. And today, even different personalities in the world have condemned and rejected America's decision to boycott countries that trade with Iran.

Before the eminent leader's speech, Mr. 'Ali Besharati, the interior minister, announced that the Ministry of Interior has mobilized all its resources to stage the fifth round of Majles elections in a healthy, calm, and totally impartial atmosphere.

**President Urges Free, Sound Elections**

*LD1701135096 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 17 Jan 96*

[FBIS Translated Text] At a meeting today with the country's provincial governors, President Hashemi-Rafsanjani emphasized the need to hold free and sound elections. The president described as a great step the reign of constructive thinking in the country. He added: The constructive thinking is an approved path and its continuation will result in Iran's honor and respect in the world of Islam.

President Hashemi-Rafsanjani said: From the religious and political point of view, the great leader of the revolution [Khamene'i] has given the necessary instruction and emphasized that the Ministry of Interior must be trustworthy and people must have confidence about the free elections.

The president said: We have trust in the people's vote and know that people's judgement is a blessing for the Islamic revolution and is a correct judgement. And the interests of the system certainly lie in the vote that people cast.

President Rafsanjani added that the existence of different tastes among the people is a natural matter. We should not worry about the presence of different kinds of thoughts in the Majles. Of course if a strong and authoritative group becomes in charge of the Majles and the government through winning the vote of people, there is no problem.

He said: Under present conditions our duty, as a government, is to encourage even the onlookers [afrade nazaragar] to participate in the elections through maintaining justice and freedom in the elections. This is only possible through paving the way for a free and sound election. The president stressed: The elections are a good test for the various groups with different ideas to realize the level of their popular support in society. And with the understanding that I have from the people's awareness and broad- mindedness, I assure you that the collection of the people who will be elected [as deputies] to the Majles, will be a collection loyal to the system. [passage omitted]

**Senior Officials Issue Statement on Parliamentary Polls**

*LD1801001496 Tehran IRNA in English 2344 GMT 17 Jan 95*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan. 18, IRNA — Sixteen senior officials including ministers and presidential deputies issued a joint statement here on Wednesday in

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relation to the forthcoming parliamentary elections and the political developments in the country.

The statement called on Iranians from all walks of life to turn out massively for the polls scheduled for March, and praised the genuine feelings of the nation for the father of the Islamic revolution, Imam Khomeyni, after the passing of 17 years since the overthrow of the tyrannical regime of the shah.

It said the late imam granted stability to the Islamic republic system and guided it through all ups and downs. It also praised the efforts of the present leader Ayatollah Seyyed 'Ali Khamene'i in continuing the path charted out by the imam.

The statement drew attention to the guidelines of the leader to the country's governors-general on Tuesday regarding the Majles polls and recalled his words to the nation to make the elections for the fifth 4-year term of the parliament a success, in order to determine the country's political and social destiny since any negligence of this obligation will be an unforgivable sin.

It said that thanks to the insight and efforts of the leaders of the revolution, the political and social status of the Iranian Majles has been gaining strength.

The statement also lauded the efforts of President 'Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani before and after the Islamic revolution particularly his role as a "senior companion" of the late imam Khomeyni and a close friend of Chief Justice Ayatollah Mohammad- Hussein Beheshti who was martyred along with 72 of his sincere companions by the anti-revolutionary elements.

The signatories said the Majles started its work and came of age during its stewardship by Rafsanjani as speaker.

They noted that support for the President Rafsanjani is support for the lofty and immortal ideals of Imam Khomeyni, and is in line with the aspirations of the people, the leader and the esteemed ulema.

The statement appealed to the people to safeguard this hard earned freedom against the enemies led by "criminal America" and its plots, and said that the way to foil the conspiracies is to be prepared for the economic, cultural and social war.

It described the Majles as the "bunker of the revolution", and appealed to the public to give their votes to the most qualified candidates who are committed to the "genuine Mohammadan Islam" and the independence of the country.

The signatories included minister of Justice Esma'il Shushtari, Minister of Education Mohammad 'Ali Najafi, Minister of Roads and Transportation Akbar Torkan, Minister of Post, Telegraph and Telephones Mohammad Gharazi, Minister of Energy Bijan Namdar-Zanganeh, Minister of Economy and Financial Affairs Morteza Mohammad-Khani, Minister of Cooperatives Gholam Reza Shafe'i, Minister of Agriculture 'Isa Kalantari, Minister of Construction Jihad Gholam Reza Foruzesh, Minister of Industry Mohammad Reza Ne'matzadeh, Central Bank Governor Mohsen Nurbakhsh, Tehran Mayor Gholam Hoseyn Karbaschi, First Deputy Foreign Minister Mohammad Hashemi, and presidential deputies, 'Ata'ollah Mohajerani, Reza Amrollahi and Mostafa Hashemi-Taba.

**Deputy on Elections, Clerics, 'Technocrats'**

*NC1701203096 Tehran SALAM in Persian 6 Jan 96 p 8*

[First part of a two-part interview with Zabihollah Karimi, Majles deputy from Shustar, by unidentified political correspondent in Tehran; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [SALAM] In your view, are there favorable conditions in our society for political parties and groups close to the left to participate in the elections?

[Karimi] In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful. Of course, if those who are in charge of the elections were to approach the elections in a more principled manner, I think the people's participation would be dazzling. 3This is because we have seen that the people have entered the fray and enthusiastically welcomed the officials of our system, and they have always been active whatever the occasion.

The Tehran Militant Clerics Society [TMCS] refuses to nominate a candidate, but they will not discourage the people from participating. Recently Karrubi asked the people to participate actively in the elections. They will simply not be presenting a list of candidates. They have members in the districts who will certainly be participating in the elections.

[SALAM] What is your opinion of recent remarks by the president regarding the reshuffling of officials? Who do you think was being addressed in the president's remarks?

[Karimi] I believe that the ruling faction's approach is to eliminate those who oppose its line; it was they that the president was addressing.

[SALAM] What is your view of the Guardians' Council's supervision of the approval of candidates' qualifications? In your opinion does this supervision not limit the people's freedom?

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[Karimi] My personal view is: Who has been chosen to do this supervision? We know that the members of the Guardians' Council are chosen in Tehran by the leader [Khamene'i]. However, this is a separate matter. Are those who select candidates in the districts and provinces also chosen by the leader? Will their personal tastes and opinions not play a part? Of course they will.

If we can say that individual likes and dislikes will not interfere with their choices, then such approval is meaningful. However, until we reach that humane level where personal preferences play no part, there is much to object to, because the personal freedom of individuals will be encroached on.

For example, if a candidate has support in one of the constituencies but the Council members do not think he is suitable, this would certainly result in limiting people's freedom and rights.

[SALAM] It has been said that the members of the oversight panels in the provinces have not changed. What is your opinion?

[Karimi] Unfortunately, this is the case all over the country. I believe that in the time remaining until the elections, the Guardians' Council should take a second look at the choices they have made so the elections will be healthier.

[SALAM] Recently Jannati stated that those who were judged to be unqualified in the previous elections should register again. In your opinion could this be a serious guarantee that the leftist faction that encountered problems in the previous elections can now participate?

[Karimi] This is up to Jannati and those who make the decisions in this regard. If they seriously decide that someone's rights were violated, or that someone has been rejected without reason and then reinstate him, it would be wonderful. However, if this is confined to mere lipservice, the experiences of the past will naturally recur.

[SALAM] Lately there has been talk of removing the clergy from the scene. What do you think about this?

[Karimi] This is a baseless allegation. From what scene is the clergy to be removed? If it is to be done by an external enemy, this has nothing to do with our revolution. However I believe that this is a mere electioneering slogan being bandied about by a few people, just as the term "technocrats" is being bandied about.

In our country, the term "technocrats" does not denote what it does in Western countries; it has a very different meaning. We have technocrats who are devout and free-thinking Muslims who had and still have responsibilities in our system. Perhaps the connotation of this term is not very clear to the public and many view it from a political perspective.

If one visits the Qom theological seminary, he will observe that they use computers, which is a technical development. Is it a sin to use computers for the progress of the country? Those who believe in the utility of technology are being called technocrats in our country. They are Muslims who believe in the benefits of technology. Only a few days ago the computer terminal was set up in the Qom seminary. Hence we can see that clerics also use computers, but they have not suddenly become technicians. They are proficient in sociology and mathematics but they are not technocrats. The term technocrat is viewed differently in our country than in other countries.

[SALAM] In your opinion, how will the groups aligned with the Militant Clerics present themselves? Will there be a coalition?

[Karimi] The groups aligned with the Militant Clerics are working on this issue and the proponents of the imam's line support these groups.

I stated that the Militant Clerics have not nominated any candidates; this is because of certain conditions that have developed in Tehran. However, in the districts and provinces there are individuals and groups supporting this faction and its line; they are actively involved on the election scene.

[SALAM] How do you foresee the future composition of the Majles?

[Karimi] The majority faction has lost most of its popularity with the people. If it were not for the propaganda organs, it would have certainly lost all its popularity because it has not fulfilled most of its slogans.

In my opinion, the future composition of the Majles will be such that the adherents to the imam's line—known as the leftist faction—will gain more seats in the Majles, so that the majority faction will not be able to retain power there.

In conclusion, I suggest to those conducting the elections and those who are concerned about the country, that they not lump all the trends in the Majles together. The Majles is at the helm of affairs and the Fifth Majles will be very critical. The world is seeing new developments. If we do not elect intelligent, well- informed individuals who are concerned about the revolution to the Majles, then we will certainly suffer for it.

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**IRNA Criticized for Views on Majles Elections**

*NC1701053296 Tehran RESALAT in Persian*
*4 Jan 96 pp 1, 16*

[Editorial by Mahmud Farshidi: "Recess Time at the News Agency"]

[FBIS Translated Text] One of the lecturers at the Department of Law and Political Sciences recently claimed in an interview with IRNA that "as far as freedom is concerned" we lag behind countries like Egypt, America, and so on. He went on to say that "it is a common mistake to think that only the government should have the right to determine the number of parties!...Freedom is something we should struggle for, shed blood for, be imprisoned for..." [ellipse as published]

The older generation may remember that during the first years of the Islamic Revolution, the dregs of the Islamic Revolution saw as their only alternative the formation of military staffs at universities in order to start an armed war against the people. They gathered a number of youths around them and, for a long time, took revenge on the innocent people in the streets and alleys. The remarks by this same professor remind one of the military staffs of those small groups, with the difference that those groups openly stated that they were against the Islamic system and intended to overthrow it, while the professor is issuing this call under a political guise. Of course, it is satisfying to know that our youths will not be fooled by such gentlemen again!

In this commentary we do not want to oppose the views of the professor or to ask him where in the world it is common for someone not to accept a ruling system and be granted permission to carry out unlimited activities. If he lived where he desires—France or America—would he have permission to go beyond criticism and to question that country's principles governing elections, the parliament, or the other state institutions?! The esteemed professor of law is very well aware that each and every country has special rules and regulations for organizational activities and that activities outside this framework are forbidden. This is the ruling principle even in America and France, which he uses as standards of comparison. Therefore, if he understands the objectives of the Islamic system and believes in them, he can become active in one of the existing political groups or start a new group following the rules and regulations. But clearly the Islamic system is not prepared to grant permission to individuals who have been futilely trying to inflict blows to this system for years, to be organized within a specific body.

However, our main protest is against IRNA, one of the major news agencies in the Islamic system, which should by rule shoulder a heavy responsibility in defending the pillars of this system vis-a- vis the numerous overt and covert onslaughts by world hegemonism. We ask the officials of this news agency how they can justify their behavior?!

Apparently the explanation given by the gentlemen [in IRNA] is that views on Western democracy are being expressed in view of the approaching Majles elections; and they call on the various strata to also express their views in order to keep the discussions on the elections warm and to make hay while the sun shines. But apparently, such things only spread disappointment and disillusionment. As an example, look at some of the comments by the news agency's special election staff and you will agree with me:

—The elections for the Fifth Majles will not be held in an open and free atmosphere.

—The Fourth Majles did not serve the interests of the people.

—No bright outlook for the Majles can be envisaged until the formation of healthy and pious parties.

—No miracles can be expected of the Fifth Majles.

And so on...

But frankly speaking, will such comments add to the people's zeal for participating in the elections?!

The most dangerous cultural illness is when the enemy propaganda bombardment succeeds and they are able to instill disillusionment in the minds of a revolutionary people. The officials of IRNA should see to it that their views and analyses are healthy and realistic.

Of course these gentlemen may claim that such comments are confidential in nature and that they are not placed at everybody's disposal. But will the poisonous impact of such publications not suggest a specific direction to key officials in the system?!

Moreover, these gentlemen pursue the same policy in the pro- government newspaper. And on the pretext of the elections, they bring into question the foundations of the dogma and the pillars of the Islamic system and lionize the "BBC-loving" intellectuals.

Frankly speaking, in the opinion of IRNA officials, how successful do these intellectuals think they can be in the elections? The art of analysis is in being realistic and correctly assessing the voters' inclinations without being affected by commotion. But what concerns us is that, God forbid, the disease of intellectualism—the first

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signs of which are considering people who share your beliefs superior and separate from the people—may be behind IRNA'S comments.

The other question is: What does questioning clericalism, the strength of the system, the authority of the supreme jurisconsult, and so on have to do with the Majles elections?!

Additionally, what can our society gain by bringing up the names of persons who have no place among the people and no new ideas to offer, and who merely transmit the wishes of the system of hegemony?!

**Sorush Responds to Velayati's Comments at University**

*NC1401143596 Tehran SALAM in Persian 2 Jan 96 p 2*

["Excerpts" of response by Dr. 'Abdolkarim Sorush to Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati's comments at Emam Sadeq University; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] In the name of God. Being involved in world issues has apparently not left any time for the foreign minister to become involved in domestic affairs. Many who have obscured the truth and many deceivers have resorted to various distortions of the "Dr. Sorush issue," all of which I have ignored since "if they pass by futility, they pass by it with honorable avoidance" [Koran verse]. But this time, irresponsible remarks have been made by a responsible official of the country which contradict the truth to such an extent that [the Koranic verse] "invite all to the path of thy Lord with wisdom and good preaching" resounds in the ears.

The students at Emam Sadeq University asked the foreign minister in a general discussion: "Has the Dr. Sorush issue caused any problems for Iran in international policy?" And the foreign minister answered: "Yes. The Dr. Sorush issue definitely affects our foreign policy situation." This in itself is an interesting point for the foreign minister to comment on, as it is based on the confidential and non-confidential messages exchanged between him and his ambassadors.

But as far as an assessment of the "Dr. Sorush issue" at home is concerned, we see that there is a half-baked attitude about it.

From the foreign minister's point of view, the "Dr. Sorush issue" means that "scientific comments that are made public" lead to "scandals" and "weaken the basis of our independence, our national harmony, and our rule"; that "they harm the people's national and ideological foundations"; that this is not only not a service to the nation "but antagonistic to this nation"; and that it is similar to remarks by Ahmad Kasravi [a clergyman who left the clergy during the Pahlavi monarchy and was later on assassinated by the Feda'iyan-e Eslam].

The picture that the foreign minister has painted of me is one of either an impostor or a prophet. But, after all, is it logical that a person who does not have access to a radio station, to television, to newspapers, to mosques, to the Friday prayer tribunes, and to religious delegations; a person who is constantly pounded by the mass media in the ugliest manner and is accused of spying, incompetence, and treachery and of being a Freemason, an American, a hypocrite, a liberal, a Salman Rushdie, a Kasravi, a Malek Khan, and so on—all of which were stated in the foreign minister's remarks— could weaken the bases of independence and national harmony, harm the foundations of the people's national and religious feelings, and weaken the administration? Not even impostors have such powers. And yes, I, Dr. Sorush, am neither an impostor nor a prophet. I am only one of God's creatures.

The picture that the foreign minister paints of Iranian society is that this society is like an institution that has been eroded by termites and that the slightest shove will make it disintegrate. And the picture that he has painted of himself is of a medieval priest who has been appointed foreign minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran now at the end of the 20th century and is wielding the weapon of excommunication in front of the alert eyes and ears of the world. He paints himself as a person who ignores his responsibilities and resorts to such comments for the sake of domestic consumption in a bid to remove a rival whom he compares to Ahmad Kasravi, thus further endangering that person. He portrays himself as someone who does not do as he preaches when he says that "nothing shou'd be said to give the enemy or this country and nation a pretext," for he himself is giving a pretext to the enemy and disgracing our powerful culture and mocking the slogan "show generosity toward friends and caution toward enemies." He does not stopping to think for one moment that if the "Dr. Sorush issue" has become an international issue, it is precisely proof of the lack of security among the pen pushers in this country, hence the fact that even the foreign minister himself resorts to these comparisons and analogies.

Dr. Sorush adds: Mr. Foreign Minister, I thirst for neither wealth nor power, and my remarks are not intended either for domestic or foreign consumption. I am not striving to defend a post nor am I seeking any reward from anyone for my remarks—be they right or wrong. [passage omitted]

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I am a person who has accumulated experiences in time and has learned from great men, and I assure you that the interests of this country and this people and the thing that will guarantee the permanence of our beliefs is freedom, without which nothing can be permanent.

Mr. Foreign Minister! I advise you not to join your voice in unison with antifreedom groups that distort the lofty name and good image of this country in the eyes of foreigners and future generations or with those who insist on propagating violence and distorting truth. They have nothing to offer this nation and cannot bring it glory. Cling to freedom because God has not created anything more beautiful than it. Do not fabricate pretexts for plucking the petals off the flower of freedom, but make sure that there are no thorns on this flower. Do not put this blessing in the hands of the evil forces; show the Iranians and the world that the words and deeds of Iran's politicians and statesmen are one, that they are serious advocators of freedom, and that they do not overtly or covertly collaborate with the enemies of freedom. It is this thought and this freedom which will ultimately uproot the evil enemy from this land. Appreciate those who speak justly and who do not expect anything in return.

## Pakistan

### Russian Report on Involvement in Chechnya Rejected

*BK1701142796 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1400 GMT 17 Jan 96*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A Foreign Office spokesman has denied the statement by the Russian leadership that Pakistan is involved in the hostage crisis in the Dagestani village of Pervomaiskaya. The spokesman said that Pakistan is not aware of the presence of any Pakistani among hostage takers in Dagestan as Pakistan was opposed to all forms of terrorism and could never condone such actions.

The spokesman categorically stated that Chechnya was an internal affair of the Russian Federation and hoped that bloodshed would be avoided by adopting peaceful political methods to resolve the conflict. He said both Russia and Chechen fighters must resume peace talks to find a negotiated settlement of the issue. Regarding Pakistan's position on Chechnya, the spokesman said that the Government of Russia understood Pakistan's stand.

### Official Denies 'Mercenaries' Aid Chechens

*LD1701160996 Tehran IRNA in English 1519 GMT 17 Jan 96*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad, Jan. 17, IRNA — Pakistan on Wednesday [17 January] denied the reports that "Pakistani mercenaries" are helping Chechen fighters holding many people hostage in the Russian republic of Dagestan. "There is no evidence about the presence of any Pakistani nationals there," a Foreign Office spokesman told IRNA, when contacted.

He was commenting on reports that Russian President Boris Yeltsin and his foreign minister has accused "mercenaries" from Pakistan of helping Chechen rebels in Dagestan." "Our embassy in Moscow has contradicted all such speculations," the spokesman said adding that Pakistan had explained its position to Russia in this respect.

He said Islamabad desires to have close relations with Moscow and favors a peaceful political solution to the Chechnya crisis.

He said Pakistan considers Chechen conflict as an internal affair of Russia. "Russia is well aware of our policy and understands that we will not condone any act," which [is] tantamount to interference in the internal affairs of another country.

### 'Powerful' Bomb in Lahore Library Injures 23

*BK1801113896 Hong Kong AFP in English 1118 GMT 18 Jan 96*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Lahore, Pakistan, Jan 18 (AFP) — A powerful bomb exploded in the library of a Lahore college on Thursday injuring 23 people and reducing some 50,000 books to ashes, police and witnesses said.

Police said the bomb was hidden in the cupboard at the Dyal Singh College Library, one of the most popular meeting points for students and intellectuals in the northeastern city.

Officials said around 50,000 books were burnt. A rare manuscript of the Koran, the Islamic holy book, and several other books of historical importance were among those destroyed.

Police put the value of the books at around one million dollars.

Officials accused unidentified terrorists of planting the "explosive material" which rocked the decades-old building. An official press report had earlier said a dormitory had been blown up.

At least 23 people including 19 students, were injured. Most of the injuries were caused by flying splinters.

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Hospital sources said a librarian, a clerk and a messenger were in serious condition.

Witnesses said a huge fire swept through the library after the blast. It took almost two hours to control the blaze. Staff attempted to salvage what they could from the thousands of burnt or half incinerated books left lying outside the building.

The explosion was the latest in a wave of terror attacks to have hit the country in recent months.

A car bomb in a market in the northwestern city of Peshawar left 45 people dead on December 21. A suicide car bomber blew up the Egyptian Embassy in Islamabad on November 19, killing 17 people and injuring 60 others.

Three people were killed in Lahore when a bomb exploded on a bus on December 1 while eight people died in the troubled city of Karachi in a massive bus bomb blast on January 7.

The library blast came only a week after the government reportedly directed the provincial administration to tighten security in the populous Punjab province of which Lahore is the capital.

Officials had suspected that unidentified terrorists had drawn up plans for further subversive activities after the attacks in Peshawar, Karachi and Islamabad.

Press reports last week said that a federal agency had secured details of a telephone conversation between two members of a "suspect group" and feared that the group was planning bomb attack in Lahore.

A local daily THE NEWS said Islamabad asked the Punjab government to take special measures against bomb blasts.

**Kashmir Committee Calls For 5 Feb Strike**

*BK1801060596 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 0300 GMT 18 Jan 96*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The chairman, Parliamentary Committee on Kashmir, Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan, has said Kashmir is a matter of life and death for Pakistan, and the people of Pakistan cannot remain silent when most heinous crimes are being committed against Kashmiri people in occupied Kashmir. Speaking at a function in Islamabad yesterday, he urged people in all parts of the country to stand up for the just cause of the Kashmiri people who have launched a brave struggle against the tyranny of Indian Government in a most difficult situation. He said the people and the Government of Pakistan shall always extend full moral and political support to the Kashmiri people in their just struggle for achieving their right to self-determination.

The chairman, Kashmir committee, said the Indian ploy of holding elections in the held valley is aimed at achieving their nefarious design of betraying the world opinion about Kashmir. He said: It will never pay, as the world community has started realizing the gravity of the situation and the magnitude of human rights violations by Indian forces. Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan said: Due to successful internationalization of the Kashmir issue, parliamentarians in Sweden, Norway, and Britain openly condemn India for its tyranny and brutal aggression against innocent Kashmiris. He appealed to the entire nation and to all political parties to express solidarity with their Kashmiri brethren by observing complete strike on 5 February and prove to the world that the Indian-occupied Kashmir is an inseparable part of Pakistan.

**Police Evict Dissidents From Rabbani Party Office**

*BK1801085396 Hong Kong AFP in English 0834 GMT 18 Jan 96*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Peshawar, Pakistan, Jan 18 (AFP) — Pakistani security forces have removed 60 Afghan dissidents from the offices of Kabul's ruling Jamiat-i-Islami party in Peshawar, party sources said Thursday.

"We are now back in control," a party official said, adding that the protestors, also members of the Jamiat party, were removed by police and intelligence agents late Wednesday.

The 60 dissidents, led by party official Isa Mohammad Ismat Qanay, took over the office in Peshawar on Monday. They sought to protest against the policies of Afghan president and Jamiat leader, Borhanoddin Rabbani, and his strongman Ahmed Shah Mas'ud.

Qanay, head of Jamiat's cultural wing, accused Rabbani and Mas'ud of pursuing policies based on race and language.

He urged Rabanni to "dissociate himself from Mas'ud if he wants to remain acceptable as the Jamiat chief to the party's rank and file."

Rabanni and Mas'ud are Persian-speaking members of the Tajik minority community, while Qanay speaks Pushtu.

Local newspapers said Qanay had apparently believed the occupation would receive Islamabad's blessing because of strained relations between the Pakistani Government and the Rabbani administration.

THE DAILY NEWS said Pakistan were quick to evict Qanay's men as failure to do so would have prompted

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the Rabbani government to condemn Islamabad over the incident.

Pakistan withdrew its diplomats from Kabul after the September 6 burning of its embassy by a mob protesting at alleged Pakistani help for a rival militia group. Islamabad insists its Afghan policy is completely neutral.

### Paper on Need To Increase Nuclear Power Resources

*BK1701122396 Rawalpindi NAWA-I-WAQT in Urdu 17 Jan 96 p 10*

[Editorial: "Nuclear Energy — Pakistan's Condition"]

[FBIS Translated Text] According to a report by an international organization, in the next nine years, India's capacity to generate nuclear power will increase from 2,375 megawatts to 4,020 megawatts, while Pakistan's nuclear power generation will increase from 139 megawatts to 439 megawatts. Japan, India and China will achieve an increase of 80 to 120 percent in the field of nuclear power. This is a result of discrimination by Western countries toward Pakistan's nuclear power program, and the obedience with which Pakistani Governments yielded to those pressures. This is proof of our insubstantial national planning. Pakistan's nuclear power generation is the lowest in South Asia, though this is what we need most. In contrast, India is constantly increasing its capability.

Besides Pakistan, there is North Korea whose nuclear power generation will increase nominally. The reason is the same — the United States adopted a discriminatory attitude toward North Korea too. Since we have failed to increase our hydro-electric power production, and since we have not been able to start construction on the Kalabagh Dam despite an initial investment, and since our MOU's [Memorandum of Understanding] with foreign countries are proving worthless, it should have been our top national priority to turn to nuclear power generation instead of conventional resources. But we never bothered to even think about it. The Karachi Nuclear Power Plant is the main nuclear power generation plant in our country, but that too generates an insignificant amount of power. The Canadian prime minister is visiting Pakistan these days. Canada is the country that stopped providing us with nuclear fuel while no such restrictions were imposed on India. The Canadian prime minister expressed his willingness to invest in Pakistan. This matter can also be discussed with him. There are two prerequisites — determination and a comprehensive plan for nuclear power generation. At present we are acting blindly. A large number of investment agreements are being signed while nothing concrete has been done. Power load shedding is increasing rather than decreasing. Electricity has become an expensive commodity. Conditions will take a turn for the worse before the turn of the century. The government must pay serious attention to this state of affairs.

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